

# شرح كتاب القواعد الأربع

Commentary on

the Four Fundamental Principles of Tawhīd

By Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī

Translation & Adaption by

Abū Saḥīyyah Taalib Alexander

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ الشَّيْخُ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْوَهَّابِ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ  
أَعْلَمُ رَحْمَتَكَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ طَلَبُ أَفْرِيطَةٍ وَأَنَّهُ سَفَاءٌ لِلْقُلُوبِ الْمَرِيضَةِ  
وَمِنْ إِيَّاهُمْ مَا عَلَيْكَ مَعْرِفَةُ دِينِكَ الَّذِي مَعْرِفَتُهُ وَالْعَمَلُ بِهِ  
يَسْبِقُ لِدُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ وَالْجَهْلُ بِهِ وَاضَاعَتُهُ سَبَبُ الدُّخُولِ  
النَّاسِ إِعَادَاةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ أَعْلَمُ رَحْمَتَكَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ يَجِبُ  
عَلَيْنَا تَعَلُّمُ أَرْبَعِ مَسَائِلَ الْأَوَّلَى الْعِلْمُ وَهُوَ مَعْرِفَةُ اللَّهِ وَمَعْرِفَةُ  
نَبِيِّهِ وَمَعْرِفَةُ دِينِ الْإِسْلَامِ بِالْأَدِلَّةِ الْكَائِنَةِ الْعَمَلُ بِهِ الْإِيمَانُ  
اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَيْهِ الرُّجُوعُ الصَّبْرُ عَلَى الْإِذَى بِهِ وَالذَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ  
تَعَالَى لِسَمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَالْعَقْصُ إِنَّ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ لَفِي خُذُلٍ  
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَتَوَضَّعُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَضَّعُوا  
بِالصَّبْرِ قَوْلُ الشَّافِعِيِّ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مَا رَزَقَ اللَّهُ حُجَّةً  
عَلَى خَلْقٍ إِلَّا هَذِهِ السُّورَةُ لِكُلِّهُمْ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى حَرَامٌ  
عَلَيْهِمْ بَارَكَ الْعِلْمُ قَبْلَ الْقَوْلِ وَالْعَمَلُ وَالذَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى فَاعْلَمُوا  
أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِدِينِكَ الْآيَةُ إِنَّهُ رَحِيمٌ  
اللَّهُ أَوْجَبَ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَمُسْلِمَةٍ تَعَلُّمُ ثَلَاثِ هَذِهِ الْمَسَائِلِ  
وَالْعَمَلُ بِهِنَّ الْأَوَّلَى أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَنَا لِعِبَادَتِهِ وَلَمْ يَخْلُقْنَا  
لِأَمْرٍ وَآخِرُهَا عَلَيْنَا رِسْوَةٌ لَا مَنْ أَطَاعَهُ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ  
وَمَنْ دَخَلَ النَّارَ وَالذَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَهِدَ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْآيَةُ الْكَائِنَةُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُدْرِكُهُ أَنْ تَشْرَكَ بِهِ مَعَهُ فِي عِبَادَةِ  
أَحَدٍ إِلَّا مَلِكٌ مُقَرَّرٌ وَلَا نَبِيٌّ مَرْسُومٌ وَالذَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى وَأَنَّ  
الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا الْكَائِنَةُ أَنَّ مَنْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ  
وَوَعَدَهُ اللَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَتَاءِ حَادُّ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Meriful, the Bestower of Mercy*

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*Commentary on the Four Fundamental Principles of Tawḥīd*

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




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## TRANSLATION KEY

ا	a		ض	ḍ		Short Vowels	
ب	b		ط	ṭ		ـَ	A
ت	t		ظ	ẓ			
ث	Th		ع	'		ـِ	I
ج	J		غ	gh			
ح	ḥ		ف	f		ـُ	U
خ	Kh		ق	q			
د	d		ك	k		long vowels	
ذ	Dh		ل	l			
ر	R		م	m		آ or اء	ā
ز	Z		ن	n			
س	S		ه	h		ي	ī
ش	Sh		و	w			
ص	ṣ		ي	y		وُ	ū

## REVERENTIAL SYMBOLS KEY<sup>1</sup>

Arabic statement	Transliteration	Meaning
	<i>Subhānah wa ta'āla</i>	He is exalted above weakness and indignity
	<i>ʿAzza wa-jal</i>	He is exalted and glorified.
	<i>Jalla Jalāhu</i>	Exalted is His glory
	<i>Ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa salam</i>	Peace and salutations of Allaah be upon him.
	<i>ʿAlayhiṣ- ṣalātu was-salaam</i>	Peace and salutations be upon him.
	<i>ʿAlayhis-salām</i>	Peace be upon him.
	<i>ʿAlayhum-us-salām</i>	Peace be upon them (male).
	<i>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu</i>	May Allah be pleased with him.
	<i>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhaa</i>	May Allah be pleased with her.
	<i>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhumā</i>	May Allah be pleased with them both (male).
	<i>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhum</i>	May Allah be pleased with them (male).
	<i>Raḍiyallāhu ʿanhunna</i>	May Allah be pleased with them (female).
	<i>Rahimullāh</i>	May Allah have mercy upon them (male).
	<i>Raḥimāllāh</i>	May Allah have mercy upon her (female).
	<i>Raḥimullāh.</i>	May Allah have mercy upon them both (male).
	<i>Raḥimbunnallāh</i>	May Allah have mercy upon them (female).

1. Adapted from the book, Inheritance Regulations & Exhortations by Dr. Muhammad al-Jibaly

# GOLDEN ADVICE FOR THE SEEKER OF ISLAMIC KNOWLEDGE<sup>1</sup>

Some Etiquette of the Seeker's Inner Self	Remember seeking knowledge is an act of worship.
	Develop the fear of Allaah.
	Be an adherent to the path of the Pious Predecessors ( <i>Salaf-uş-Şāliḥ</i> ).
	Put arrogance and pride behind you.
	Adorn yourself with the splendors of knowledge.
	Avoid the gatherings of vain speech.
	Adorn yourself with gentleness and tolerance.
The Etiquette of the Seeker with his Teacher	Treat your teacher with respect, honor and courtesy.
	Try to take notes as your teacher explains.
	Do not contradict your teacher in a disrespectful manner.
	Listen attentively to your teacher's answers.
	Do not pester your teacher for an answer to your questions.
	Address your teacher in a respectful manner.
	Do not test your teacher's nerve nor patience.
The Etiquette of Companionship	Beware of the bad companion.
	Befriend those who will encourage you to be studious.
	Avoid disputing with your teacher.
	Befriend those who adorn their knowledge with good deeds.
	Beware of the haughty and arrogant student.
	Beware of the student whose knowledge and deeds are not commensurate.
	Be a companion of the one who has a sound creed.
The Etiquette of the Student in Leading a Life of Knowledge	Have high a high aspirations in learning.
	Kindle the desire for seeking knowledge
	Preserving knowledge through writing it.
	Seeking refuge in Allaah when acquiring & seeking knowledge.
	Summaries long compilations.
	Do not hesitate to ask questions.
	Discuss without falling into disputation.
	Revise what you have learnt.
	Learn the essential of each discipline.

1. Adapted from the book, The Etiquettes of the Seeker of Islaamic Knowledge by shaykh Bakar Adullah Abou Zayd (may Allaah have mercy upon him).

## SOME ETIQUETTES FOR LEARNING

- ❖ ALWAYS have course materials and writing implements with for the duration of the lesson.
- ❖ APPLY what you have learnt to your daily life.
- ❖ CONSTANTLY make notes of the knowledge and information given in each lesson as this will help you to store it in your long-term memory.
- ❖ DEVELOP positive study patterns that help you to retain what you have learnt.
- ❖ FORM study groups with other students to consolidate what you have learnt in lessons.
- ❖ LISTEN to the contributions of others and do not unduly interject while others are talking.
- ❖ MAKE sure your questions are related to the subject matter at hand and try to avoid questions that are off the topic. These types of questions are better left for open question and answer sessions or a more appropriate time.
- ❖ NEVER interrupt your teacher.
- ❖ REMEMBER that you are seeking Islamic knowledge for which there is a great reward in this life and the next.
- ❖ REVISE what you have written and try to commit it to memory.



## INTRODUCTION

All praise is due to Allāh, we seek His help and assistance; and forgiveness; we seek refuge in Allāh from the evil within ourselves and the consequences of our evil deeds. Whoever Allāh guides none can misguide him, and whoever Allāh misguides none can guide him aright. I bear witness (and publicly testify) that there is no deity worthy of worship (in truth) but Allāh, alone without any partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His servant and His Messenger (ﷺ).

The Four Principles or *al-Qawā'id al-Arba'* by *Shaykh-ul-Islām* Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhāb (رحمته الله) is an essential text for the aspiring student of Islāmic knowledge who is in the initial stages of their journey to study *Tawhīd*. The author writes in a clear and lucid manner and is conscientious in supporting each issue or point with scriptural evidence from the Qur'ān or the authentic Sunnah.

The current commentary, in the hands of the noble reader, aims to present an English commentary of the text - the Four Principles - focusing and elaborating on issues pertinent to English-speaking contexts and, in essence, is a synthesis of a number of commentaries and explanations written by the venerable and erudite scholars of Islām.

We ask Allāh to accept this humble effort and to make it heavy on the scales of good deeds on the Day of Resurrection.

*Taalib Alexander*

*20 Rajab 1443 AH/21 February 2022 CE*

## *Lesson 1:*

# *Biography of Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī the Four Fundamental Principles of Tawḥīd.*

### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Know who was *Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī*.
2. To examine the scholarly contributions and academic standing of *Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī*.
3. To explore the distinguishing features of the book “*the Four Fundamental Principles of Tawḥīd*.” as authored by *Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī*.

### **II. Introduction:**

At the heart of the craft of writing lies the author's skill in offering readers a glimpse into their life, unfurling a tapestry interwoven with personal experiences. This not only provides readers with access to the intricacies of the author's journey but also offers profound insights into how these life encounters have shaped their perspectives and knowledge. In the realm of transmitted sciences, where the author's discourse predominantly resides, understanding the author becomes crucial. The acceptance of transmitted

knowledge relies heavily on the credibility and trustworthiness of the individual conveying it. The esteemed scholar Ibn Sirīn (may Allāh have mercy upon him) succinctly captures this essence, underscoring the imperative for transmitted sciences to flow exclusively from fountains of knowledge and trustworthiness, as articulated in his wise words:

“Indeed, this knowledge is the religion, so consider carefully from whom you take your religion from.”<sup>1</sup>

Hence, scholars have asserted:

“Engaging in religious practices or providing religious verdicts based on books whose authors are unknown, and the authenticity of their content is uncertain, is not permissible.”

So, who is *Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him)? What is the significance of his book, “The Four fundamental Principles of Islām”?

### III. Focus of the Lesson:

#### 1. Concise Biography of the Author

##### i. Name and Genealogy:

He is the *Imām, shaykh-ul-Islām* Muhammad b. Abdul-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān b. ‘Alī b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Rāshid b. Barīd b. Musharraf at-Tamīmī an-Najdī (may Allāh have mercy upon him).

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<sup>1</sup> Collected by Muslim in his introduction to his collection, Narration 25.

ii. Birth and Upbringing:

He was born in the year 1115 AH corresponding to 1703 CE. He was born into a house of knowledge and piety. His father, Abdul-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān, was a judge and legal authority of the region. Similarly, his grandfather, Sulaymān b. ‘Alī, was a legal authority and a leading jurist of the region. As an adolescent his father made him lead the prayers and upon attaining puberty he married and performed the pilgrimage to Makkah, the Hajj.

iii. Travels and Seeking Knowledge:

From a young age the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) was a seeker of Islāmic knowledge, initially from his father, from whom he learnt the fundamentals of Islāmic Knowledge. He also read, voraciously, the books of *shaykh-ul-Islām* Ibn Taymīyah<sup>2</sup> (d. 728 AH/1328 CE) (may Allāh have mercy upon him) and his venerable student Ibn-ul-Qayyām<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> He is: Taqī ad-Dīn ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn ‘Abdus-Salām al-Numayrī al-Ḥarrānī (661 AH - 728 AH = 1263 CE - 1328 CE). He was popularly known as Ibn Taymīyah: The *Imām*, *Shaykh of Islām*. He was born in Harran, and his father moved with him to Damascus, where he grew up and gained fame. Seeking a fatwa, he went to Egypt, where he faced opposition and was imprisoned for a period, later transferred to Alexandria. He was released, travelled to Damascus in 712 AH, arrested again in 720 AH, released again, but died in captivity in the Citadel of Damascus. The entire city of Damascus mourned his funeral. He was known for extensive research in various branches of knowledge, advocating for religious reform. Proficient in interpretation and fundamentals, eloquent in language, both in writing and speech. In the hidden pearls of knowledge, he engaged with scholars, excelled in argumentation, and demonstrated proficiency in knowledge and interpretation. He issued fatwas and taught when he was under twenty years old. As for his written works, it is mentioned in "al-Durar" that they may exceed four thousand volumes. He passed away, may Allah have mercy on him, in the Citadel on Monday, the 9th of Jumada al-Akhirah in the year 728 AH. (partially from, *al-‘Ilām*, vol.1, pp. 142 – 144).

<sup>3</sup> He is Shams ad-Dīn Abū ‘Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb az-Zur‘ī d-Dimashqī l-Ḥanbalī, popularly known as Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyyah. He was born in Damascus in the seventh of Safar in the year 691 AH, and he was an *Imām*, jurist, and *Ḥadīth* scholar. He engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and excelled in various fields, especially in the sciences of Qur’ānic

(d. 751 AH/1350 CE) (may Allāh have mercy upon him). The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) travelled to a number of places seeking Islamic knowledge, from among them: Makkah, Madīnah, Irāq and al-Aḥsā'.

iv. Trial and Tribulations:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) faced many trials and tribulations in calling the people to *Tawḥīd* and the authentic creed.

After his return home, he started to attract a large following, including the ruler of 'Uyaynah, 'Uthmān ibn Mu'ammār. In 'Uyaynah the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) began to call the people back to the pristine teachings of Islām and to implement the *Sharī'ah* or Islāmic law and legislation without restriction. He forbade grave worship, even levelling the grave claimed to be that of Zayd ibn al- Khaṭṭāb (may Allāh be pleased with him) a companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), whose grave was venerated by local tribes.

He ordered the cutting down of trees that were venerated and considered sacred by local tribes. These actions

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exegesis (*Tafsīr*), *Ḥadīth*, Islāmic law and the fundamentals of jurisprudence. Upon the return of *Shaykh-ul-Islām* Taqī ad-Dīn 'Aḥmad ibn Taymīyyah from Egypt in the year 712 AH, Ibn Qayyim accompanied him and continued his studies under his guidance until the death of Ibn Taymīyyah. He was influenced by him and drew extensively from his knowledge. Ibn Qayyim was imprisoned in the Citadel of Damascus during the period of Ibn Taymīyyah's imprisonment. After Ibn Taymīyyah's death in 728 AH, Ibn Qayyim was released and continued his scholarly activities. He had a significant presence in the field of knowledge, and his impact was extensive. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya passed away in Damascus on the night of Thursday, the thirteenth of Rajab. His funeral prayer was held in the Umayyad Mosque after the Dhuhr prayer on the following day. He was buried in the Bab al-Saghir cemetery. His funeral witnessed a large turnout, including judges, scholars, and the general public. He lived to be around sixty years old at the time of his death.

gained the attention of Sulaymān ibn Muhammad ibn Ghurayr, the chief of al-Aḥsā' and al-Qaṭīf, who held substantial influence in Najd. Ibn Ghurayr threatened Ibn Mu'ammār with retaliatory actions if he did not drive the author away and to stop him preaching. Subsequently, Ibn Mu'ammār forced the author to leave 'Uyaynah.

Upon his expulsion from 'Uyaynah the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) was invited to settle in neighboring town of ad-Diriyah by its ruler Muhammad bin Sa'ūd (may Allāh have mercy upon him). The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) and Muhammad bin Sa'ūd (may Allāh have mercy upon him) agreed that, together, they would unite and spread the true teachings of Islām, a legacy that remains until today.

v. Teachers:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) studied under the tutelage of a number of leading scholars of his time, from among them:

1. *Shaykh* Abdul-Waḥḥāb b. Sulaymān (his father).
2. *Shaykh* Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān (his uncle).
3. Shaykh Abdullah Ibrāhīm Sayyif.
4. *Shaykh* Muhammad Ḥayyāh as-Sindī.
5. *Shaykh* Muhammad Majmū'ī al-Baṣrī.
6. *Shaykh* Abdullah Sālim al-Baṣrī.

May Allāh have mercy upon them all.

vi. Students:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) was blessed with a large number of students, from among them:

1. *Imām* Abdul- ‘Azīz b. Muhammad b. Sa’ūd.
2. Prince Sa’ūd b. Abdul-‘Azīz b. Muhammad.
3. *Shaykh* Abdur-Rahmān b. Hassan.
4. *Shaykh* Ḥamad b. Nāṣir b. Mu’ammār.
5. *Shaykh* Hussain b. Ghannām.

vii. Scholarship:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) was blessed to have written a large number of books and treatises, from among the most popular of them:

1. *Kitāb at-Taḥḥīd* (The Book of Monotheism).
2. *al-Uṣūl ath-Thalāthah* (The Three fundamental Principles).
3. *al-Qawā’id al-Arba’* (The Three fundamental Principles).
4. *Kashf-ush-Shubuhāt* (Clarification of the Doubts).
5. *al-Uṣūl us-Sittah* (The Six Fundamental Principles).
6. *Kitāb-ul-Kabā’ir* (The Book of the Major Sins).
7. *Naḥwāqīḍ al-Islām* (the Nullifiers of Islaam).

viii. Passing of the Author

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) passed away in the year 1206 AH/1792 CE after a short illness, may Allāh have mercy upon him.

2. An Overview of the Treatise:

i. Introduction to the Treatise:

This treatise, ‘The Four fundamental Principles of Islām’ (Arabic: *al-Qawā'id-ul-'Arba'ah*) includes the fundamentals of *Tawḥīd*, or Islāmic Monotheism and its antithesis *Shirk* or polytheism. The treatise centres on a comprehensive introduction to the topic and four important and essential principles.

ii. The Four Principles: An Overview:

The treatise, despite its small size - the original manuscript being roughly two pages in length – is a treasure-trove full of knowledge. The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) has written the treatise in his famous and inimitable style which is clear and lucid, presenting each issue in a brief and concise manner which is comprehensible to the beginner and expert alike.

The treatise is prefaced by an introduction in which the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) outlines: the keys of success, definitions of *Tawḥīd* and its antithesis *Shirk*, a look



at the understanding of worship in Islām, and an elucidation of the corrupting nature of *Shirk*.

This is then followed by the first principle in which the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) clarifies: that the disbelievers in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed monotheism in Allāh's Lordship, however, they did not affirm monotheism in Allāh's Worship. The rejection of monotheism in Allāh's worship meant that they did not enter into Islām nor were they considered to be monotheists.

Following this is the second principle, in which the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) clarifies that the polytheists in the time of the prophet (ﷺ) worshipped idols believing that they could intercede on their behalf - to Allāh - and that they brought them closer to Allāh. They did not worship them believing that they benefited them nor harmed them but saw them as being intermediaries with Allāh, interceding on their behalf due to their posing piety or virtue.

In the third principle the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) explained that the prophet (ﷺ) appeared among a people who worshipped different idols and deities, however, he did not distinguish between them, seeing them all as variant adherents of polytheism.

Lastly, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) concludes with the fourth principle in which he points out that the polytheists in his times and by extension in our times

were more severe and intense in their polytheism than those in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The treatise is an essential read for the person beginning their journey on seeking Islāmic knowledge, particularly, those aiming to master the most important discipline of Islāmic Knowledge which is *'Ulūm-ul-Aqīdah* or the Science of the Islāmic Creed with *Tawhīd* at its head.

iii. The Importance of this Treatise:

*Tawhīd* stands at the apex of Islām, the fundamental of all fundamentals upon which all acts of worship – belief, statement and action – stand upon. It is because of *Tawhīd* that the creation was bought into existence, the prophets and messengers were sent, and paradise and hellfire were created. Thus, given the magnitude and importance of *Tawhīd* it is imperative that the believer has a full understanding of its principles and categories.

Given the above, this treatise becomes essential to study as it is a concise presentation of *Tawhīd*, and its antitheses which is *Shirk* or polytheism. The Four Fundamental Principles of Islam is a treatise which concisely presents the fundamentals of *Tawhīd* and outlines the Islamic understanding of *Shirk* and its major categories.

The importance of this treatise may be seen in the extensive scholarship around its study with a large number of

scholars having written commentaries and annotations of the text.

#### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Creed (عقيدة): Generally, *Aqīdah* or Creed is a term that refers to those things a person believes in, such as, articles of faith. Specifically, the term – when preceded by the definite article the – refers to firm belief in Allāh, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, the Divine decree and Predestination (both its good and bad aspects), and everything that has been mentioned in the Noble Qur’ān and the authentic *Sunnah* concerning the fundamentals of religion, matters of the unseen, and related narratives.
2. *Tawḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism (التوحيد): Singling out Allāh in that which is unique and specific to Him in terms of Lordship, Worship and His Divine Names and Lofty Attributes.
- 3, Principles (قواعد): *Qarwā'id* is the plural of the noun '*qā'idah*' which may be translated as being principle or principles. Linguistically, it means the foundations. Islāmically, it may be defined as being, 'a comprehensive affair which applies to all smaller composite parts of it'.<sup>4</sup>

#### V. Lesson Summary:

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<sup>4</sup> *al-Murwsū'ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, vol. 34, p. 73.

This lesson looks at the biography of the *Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) and his noble book “*The Four fundamental Principles of Islām.*”

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. What is the specific focus of *the Four fundamental Principles of Islām*?
2. Why is the treatise *The Four fundamental Principles of Islām* an important text to read and learn?

## VIII. Assessment:

1. Who was *Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī?
2. What is the significance of the treatise *The Four fundamental Principles of Islām.*
3. Why is the Four fundamental Principles of *Tawḥīd* considered important in the field of Islāmic Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*) or the Science of the Islāmic Creed (*‘Ulūm-ul-Aqīdah*)?

## XI. Extension Activity:

*Imām* Abdul-Azīz bin ‘Abdullāh bin Bāz<sup>5</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>5</sup> He is *Shaykh* ‘Abdul-‘Azīz bin ‘Abdullāh bin Bāz was born in Riyadh on the twelfth of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 1330 AH. He grew up in an environment of knowledge and righteousness, memorizing the Quran before reaching adolescence. He began

“These are four principles that the author emphasised, and they are important principles to understand well from his intellect. Understanding the religion of the polytheists and comprehending the religion of the Muslims are crucial aspects. Most people do not grasp these principles, and that is why matters became confusing for them. They ended up worshiping graves, the inhabitants of graves, saints, trees, and stones besides Allāh, thinking they were on something significant due to their ignorance of the true nature of monotheism and the reality of polytheism.”

Please read the text and complete the following tasks:

1. What are the four principles emphasised by the author, and why are they considered important from his perspective?
2. How does the author highlight the significance of understanding both the religion of the polytheists and the religion of the Muslims?

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experiencing a weakening of his eyesight due to an illness that affected his eyes, leading to the complete loss of vision in the year 1350 AH when he was 20 years old. This event increased his determination to seek knowledge. Despite losing his sight, he pursued learning under scholars with exceptional intelligence, a sharp memory, quick wit, and a deep understanding of scholarly matters. He was known for his humility, asceticism, patience, generosity, and excellent character. Despite facing various challenges, he excelled in diverse fields such as the Islamic Creed, Qur’anic exegesis, Islamic law and jurisprudence, and Ḥadīth, and the study of sects and schools of thought. He acquired his knowledge from several scholars, including *Shaykh* Muḥammad bin Abdul-Laṭīf Āl-Shaykh, *Shaykh* Sa’ad bin Ḥamad bin Atiq, *Shaykh* Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Āl-Shaykh, and others. *Shaykh* bin Bāz initially served as a judge in Kharg, then in Aldalam, and later became the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after the death of Mufti Ibn Ibrahim. He taught at the Scientific Institute in Riyadh in 1372 AH, and later became the president of the Islāmīc University in Madinah in 1395 AH. His life was dedicated to knowledge and education, and he contributed significantly to the Islamic nation through his teachings and writings in various Islamic sciences, leaving behind a vast legacy of fatwas, explanations, and lessons on Fiqh, Tawhid, and other Islamic disciplines. He passed away due to several illnesses on the night of Thursday, the 28th of Muharram, 1420 AH, at King Faisal Hospital in Taif. His funeral prayer was held at the Haram Mosque after the Friday prayer, and he was buried in the Al-Adl Cemetery. May Allah have mercy on him and reward him abundantly for his contributions to Islam and the Muslims.

3. Why do most people fail to grasp these principles, leading to confusion in their beliefs and practices, as described by the author?

#### X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. find the definition of the term: '*Basmallāh*.'
2. Why is the '*Basmallāh*' important?
3. Is beginning with the '*Basmallāh*' an Islāmic practice?



## *Lesson 2:*

### *An Explanation of the Basmalah*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand the significance of invoking the name of Allāh as an expression of seeking His mercy and benevolence.
2. Explore the Islāmic understanding of Allāh as the Most Merciful and Bestower of Mercy, and its implications for believers.
3. Reflect on the spiritual and moral dimensions associated with the introductory phrase “In the Name of Allāh” in Islāmic teachings.

#### **II. Introduction:**

The phrase: “In the Name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy,” holds deep significance in Islām, signifying the initiation of actions with a consciousness of Allāh’s presence. By invoking these beautiful words, Muslims express reliance on Allāh's mercy and benevolence, establishing a moral framework for all endeavours. This phrase encapsulates the essence of Islāmic teachings, emphasising alignment of intentions and actions with the sincerity to Allāh. It serves as a constant reminder to approach all aspects of life with gratitude and mindfulness, seeking Allāh's guidance and protection.

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ		In the Name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Allāh (الله): this is a divine Names which, according to some of the scholars, all the other Divine Names follow. Its meaning is, the one who deserves to be deified and worshipped by all creation.
2. The Most Merciful (الرَّحْمَنُ): Its meaning is, the one who is endowed with the attribute of great and extensive mercy.
3. The Bestower of Mercy (الرَّحِيمُ): This is a Divine Name of Allāh, and which may be applied restrictedly to the creation. Its meaning denotes one whose mercy is restricted to those whom He wills from His servants.
4. Principles (القواعد): this term refers to a set of laws or principles used to define or organise something. These rules can be related to a variety of subjects, such as language, mathematics, or any other field that requires organization and specification.

### V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks the *Basmalah* and its importance.



## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Extract from the text what is the significance of invoking the name of Allāh in the introductory phrase: “In the Name of Allāh?”
2. How does the attribute of Allāh being "the Bestower of Mercy" contribute to the understanding of His benevolence in the context of this phrase?
3. In what ways does the introductory phrase set a spiritual tone by emphasising the qualities of mercy and benevolence associated with Allāh?

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. The Meaning of the *Basmalah*:

The author (ﷺ) begins this treatise with what is known as the *Basmalah*, that is, the saying: “*In the name of Allāh.*” From the meanings of this phrase: ‘I begin this deed seeking help and assistance from Allāh, asking for His blessings by beginning in His name, Glorified is He.’

2. The Significance of the *Basmalah*:

The significance of the *Basmalah* lies in its role as a profound invocation that marks the beginning of an action or a written work, seeking His help and assistance. This is illustrated in the following:

- i. beginning with the *Basmalah* follows the book of Allāh which begins each chapter – except the ninth – with the *Basmalah*.
- ii. Similarly, it is from the *Sunnah* of our beloved prophet (ﷺ) to begin his letters and correspondence with the *basmalah*, for example, the letter sent by the Prophet (ﷺ) to the Byzantine leader Heraclius, as detailed in the *Ḥadīth* (English, Prophetic tradition) collected by al-Bukhārī.<sup>6</sup>
- iii. The *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions of the Prophet [ﷺ]) began their letters, treatises, and correspondence with the *Basmalah* and this has been the lasting practice of the scholars and the righteous up until today.

### 3. Benefits from the Lesson:

Beginning with the *Basmalah* has several benefits, from among them:

1. It is a means to seek the blessings of Allāh when beginning an endeavour.
2. It is acting in accordance with the Noble Qur'ān, whose first verse begins with the *Basmalah*.
3. It is acting in accordance with the *Sunnah* of our beloved Prophet (ﷺ).

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<sup>6</sup> Collected by al-Bukhārī (1997) *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Arabic-English), vol.1, pp, 50 – 55, no. 7.

4. It is acting in accordance with the lofty example of the Prophets.
5. It is also acting in accordance with the example of the scholars and the righteous.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. What is the meaning of the *Basmalah*?
2. Why did the author begin this treatise with the *Basmalah*?
3. What is the significance of the *Basmalah*?

### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *shaykh* ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Sa’dī<sup>7</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>7</sup> He is: ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Si’dī, from the tribe of Tamīm, was born in ‘Unayzah, Qassim, on the 12th of Muharram in the year 1307 AH. The Sheikh grew up as an orphan, losing his mother at the age of four and his father at the age of seven. However, he was raised in a righteous manner, attracting admiration for his intelligence, wit, and strong desire for seeking and acquiring knowledge. He memorised the Noble Qur’ān by the age of eleven and pursued knowledge under the guidance of local scholars, excelling in various fields. At the age of twenty-three, he began teaching and became known for his excellent teaching skills. Despite facing visual impairment, he continued his pursuit of knowledge and became proficient in the Hanbali school of thought. He demonstrated extensive knowledge in jurisprudence and its principles, initially adhering strictly to the Hanbali school under the guidance of his teachers. However, he later broadened his perspectives, prioritizing evidence-based opinions over strict adherence to a particular school of thought. His profound understanding of Islamic sciences, particularly influenced by the works of *Shaykh-al-Islām* Ibn Taymīyyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim, contributed to his expertise in various disciplines of the Islāmic sciences. The *shaykh* was dedicated to writing, producing numerous works in the fields of Islamic creed, Islāmic law and jurisprudence, Qur’ānic hermeneutics and exegesis, and Islāmic manners and etiquettes. His collected writings were published in 27 volumes under the title "Collected Works of shaykh the Venerable Scholar ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Si’dī. He passed away in ‘Unayzah, Qassim, at the age of sixty-nine, leaving behind a legacy of learning, teaching, and authorship.

“And know that among the agreed-upon principles among the predecessors of the Muslim community and its leaders is the belief in the Names and Attributes of Allah and the rulings associated with these attributes. For example, they believe that He is the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy, possessing the mercy with which He is characterized, related to the compassionate. All blessings are, in effect, a result of His mercy, and the same applies to all His names. Regarding the All-Knowing, it is said: He is knowledgeable, possessing knowledge, knowing everything, capable, having the power to determine everything.”

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. Why is it important to believe in Allāh's Divine Names and Lofty Attributes, like His Mercy, as described in the text?
2. Why is the belief in the Divine Names and Lofty Attributes of Allāh considered a fundamental principle among the early Muslim community, and how does it shape their faith, as explained in the text?
3. What does the text say about understanding Allāh as the All-Knowing and His abilities?

#### **X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:**

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Why is supplication an important act of worship?

2. How is supplication from the lofty manners and etiquettes of Islām?



## *Lesson 3:*

### *The Author's Supplication for the Reader or Student of the Treatise.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. To understand the significance of invocation and supplicating to Allāh, recognising His Sovereignty and Authority.
2. Explore the dual aspect of the supplication, seeking protection in both the worldly-life and the afterlife.
3. To look at some of the manners and etiquettes related to the relationship between the Muslim scholar and the student of Islāmic knowledge.

#### **II. Introduction:**

Scholars, recognised as beacons of knowledge, understand the pivotal role of supplication in the journey of learning and studying Islāmic knowledge. Their supplication, often directed towards the success of their students, reflect a deep sense of responsibility and care. Muslim scholars recognise that success in acquiring Islāmic knowledge goes beyond the power of intellectual reasoning; it is dependent upon divine assistance from Allāh. Hence, their supplications are a testament to their belief in the intertwining of religious devotion and academic excellence. Students, in turn, find solace

and inspiration in the sincere supplication of their teachers and scholars, who call upon Allāh to guide them and grant them success in their studies. Thus, the student of Islāmic knowledge should understand that the path to true knowledge is illuminated not just by diligent study but also by the divine blessings invoked through supplication.

### III. The Text:

*Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْكَرِيمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَتَوَلَّكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ. وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَكَ مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَمَا كُنْتَ،</p>	<p>I ask Allāh, the Most Honourable, Lord of the mighty throne that He protects you in (this worldly) life and the afterlife and He makes you blessed wherever you might be,</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Lord (رَبِّ): The term Lord (Arabic, *rabb*) is a name that can only be applied unrestrictedly to Allāh. From its meaning is, the master and Lord who has no partner nor example like Him in respect to His Lordship and sovereignty. It may be applied restrictedly to the creation, However, some scholars hold that it may only be used in possessive constructions, such as, *lord of the house* (*rabb-ul-Bayt*).
2. Mighty Throne (الْعَرْشُ الْعَظِيمِ): The Mighty Throne is the glorious Throne of Allāh above which He (ﷻ) is established, as mentioned in the

Noble Qur'ān<sup>8</sup> and the authentic *Sunnah*.<sup>9</sup> The Throne is one of the greatest of His creation.

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks the author's (may Allāh have mercy upon him) supplication for the reader and student of the treatise.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. How does the author express his commitment to the reader's well-being in the text?
2. What is the significance of the supplication included in the introduction, and how does it contribute to the overall tone of the work?
3. How does the author view the connection between knowledge and spirituality, as suggested by the act of invoking divine blessings for the reader?
4. In what ways does the supplication extend beyond a formal gesture, and what does it reveal about the author's intentions and values in crafting this introduction?

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

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<sup>8</sup> See: *Sūrah Ṭa-Ha* (20): 5, *Sūrah al-'A' rāf* (7): 54; *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* (23): 86 and *Sūrah al-'A' rāf* (7): 174, for example.

<sup>9</sup> See: *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, no. 537a, for example.



This lesson includes the following topics:

1. The Supplication for the Reader and the student of Islāmic Knowledge:

i. The Importance of Asking Allāh for One's Need:

The author (may have mercy upon him) states: "I ask Allāh." Here, he continues the introduction of the treatise with a supplication for the reader. Asking Allāh to bestow his Assistance and favour upon His servant is a central aspect of Islamic practice where believers seek guidance, mercy. This is built on the core belief in Allāh's being all-powerful, it shows faith in action, highlighting that the most important guidance and fulfilment comes from the One who knows and sees everything and is in control of the affairs. The need to ask Allāh – alone – for His aid and assistance is reflected in the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"If you ask, then ask Allāh [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allāh [alone]." <sup>10</sup>

ii. The Importance of Supplication (*Du'ā*):

Supplication is an act of worship which holds a lofty status in Islām. When one engages in supplication, they discover a source of nourishment for the soul and it serves to fortify the worshipper, strengthen their foundation, and empower them to overcome any challenges. Supplication becomes a powerful

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<sup>10</sup> Reported by Abdullah ibn Abbas (may Allāh be pleased with him) and collected by at-Tirmithī (no. 2516) and declared *Ṣaḥīḥ* or 'Authentic' by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmithī* (no. 2516).

shield, preventing despair from infiltrating the soul and keeping weakness at bay.

Supplication is an act of worship among the most significant acts of devotion, one of the greatest forms of obedience, and one of the most beneficial approaches to nearness to Allāh. This is affirmed by the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ).

“Supplication is worship.” and then he (ﷺ) recited:

﴿لَوْ قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾<sup>11</sup>

“And your Lord says: “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”

(*Sūrah Ghāfir* [40]: 60)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Reported by Nu'mān bin Bashīr (may Allāh be pleased with him) and collected by at-Tirmithī (no. 2969) and declared *Ṣaḥīḥ* or 'Authentic' by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmithī* (no. 3247).

Supplication has rules, regulations and conditions. It is important to observe and follow them in order to gain closeness to Allāh, earn rewards, and enter into paradise.

a) Categories of Supplication (*Du'ā*):

The scholars who specialise in Islāmic jurisprudence categorise Supplication (*Du'ā*) into two types:

1. Supplication (*Du'ā*) of Worship: This type of supplication is an act of worship. It involves praising and glorifying Allāh without seeking specific needs or requests.
2. Supplication (*Du'ā*) of Request: This type of supplication involves asking Allāh for specific needs, seeking His assistance, guidance, or blessings. It is a form of seeking help and expressing one's desires and necessities before Allāh.

b) Etiquettes of Supplication (*Du'ā*) and Means of its Acceptance:

1. Sincerity to Allāh.
2. To begin with praising and thanking Allāh, and sending salutations and blessings upon the Prophet (ﷺ), and ending with that.

3. Certainty and determination in supplication, and having confidence in the response.
4. Perseverance in supplication and avoiding impatience.
5. Presence of the heart in supplication.
6. Supplicating in times of ease and hardship.
7. Seeking help only from Allāh alone.
8. Not supplicating against one's family, wealth, children, or oneself.
9. Lowering one's voice in supplication between fear and audible expression.
10. Acknowledging sin, seeking forgiveness for it, acknowledging blessings, and thanking Allāh for them.

c) Times, Circumstances, and Places where Supplication is Answered:

There are numerous times, circumstances and places when supplication is answered and accepted, from among them:

1. The Night of Decree (*Laylat al-Qadr*).
2. In the last part of the night.
3. After the obligatory prayers.

4. Between the call to prayer (*Adhān*) and the establishment of prayer (*Iqāmah*).
5. At any hour of the night.
6. During the call to the obligatory prayers.
7. When rain falls.
8. During the mobilization of the ranks for the sake of Allāh.
9. An hour on Friday, with the more likely opinion being the last hour of the afternoon, possibly the time of the sermon and prayer.
10. While drinking Zamzam water with sincere intention.

iii. Supplication of Three Essential Things:

In his supplication the author (may have mercy upon him) asks Allāh for three essential things for the reader:

- i. He guides and protects them.
- ii. He makes them beneficial to others.
- iii. He makes them blessed and a source of blessings wherever they may be.

iv. The Author's affirmation of Allāh's Transcendence:

What is implicit to this introduction is the author's (may have mercy upon him) affirmation of Allāh's Throne and thus, His transcendence. This is an implicit refutation of the erroneous belief that Allāh (ﷻ) is - physically - everywhere or incarnate in His creation. Rather He, the Exalted, is above His Throne which is above the Seven heavens and earths.<sup>12</sup> However, He is omnipresent and omnipotent.

## 2. Benefits from the Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from the introduction of the treatise, from among them:

1. From the lofty manners of the scholars is that they supplicate – to Allāh – for their students.
2. Asking Allāh to protect the believer is from the lofty manners of the scholars and the righteous.
3. Being of benefit to oneself and, importantly, others is a great blessing.
4. Believing in the Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes of Allāh is an essential part of *Imān* (faith).
5. Allāh's Throne is True and Allāh is distinct from His creation and to believe He is (physically) everywhere or incarnate in His creation is both an erroneous belief and deviation.

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<sup>12</sup>Commentary on the creed of At-Tabarī, pp. 223 – 226. *Mu'jam Alfāz al-'Aqīdah*, pp. 39 – 40.

## VIII. Assessment:

1. How does the author demonstrate the importance of asking Allāh for one's needs in the introduction?
2. Explain the significance of supplication (*Du'ā*) in Islām as mentioned in the text.
3. What are the three essential things the author asks Allāh for on behalf of the reader in the supplication?

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar Taqī ad-Dīn 'Aḥmad ibn 'Abdul-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abdus-Salām an-Numayrī al-Ḥarrānī popularly known as *shaykh-ul-Islām* ibn Taymīyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“The wording of supplication in the Qur’ān covers both aspects: supplication in the sense of worship or supplication in the sense of a request. Each of them implies the other, but the servant may find himself in a situation where his intention is to seek his needs and alleviate his distress. In doing so, he seeks through asking and humbly pleading. Although this is an act of worship and obedience, his initial purpose is the fulfilment of the desired outcome, such as victory, sustenance, and well-being in general. Then, supplication and humble pleading open for him the doors of faith in Allāh, His knowledge, love, and the blessing of remembering and supplicating to Him. This becomes more beloved and esteemed to him than the

worldly need that initially concerned him. This is a mercy from Allāh to His servants, guiding them from worldly needs to higher religious objectives.”

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What are the two aspects covered by the wording of supplication in the Noble Qur’ān?
2. How does the servant find themselves in a situation where their intention is to seek his needs and alleviate his distress?
3. What is the servant's initial purpose when seeking through asking and humbly pleading in supplication?
4. How does supplication and humble pleading open the doors of faith in Allāh, His knowledge, love, and blessings?

#### **X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:**

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. What are the keys of happiness?
2. Why is it important to know and understand what they are?
3. How does the believer react if blessings are bestowed upon them?





## *Lesson 4:*

### *The Keys to Happiness*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Explore the understanding of gratitude as components of Islāmic faith and happiness, particularly in acknowledging Allāh's blessings.
2. To grasp the vital role of patience and forbearance in navigating trials and tribulations, recognising their significance in fortifying faith and achieving contentment.
3. Understand the importance of seeking forgiveness from Allāh in response to human fallibility and sins, and develop the ability to sincerely repent and seek Allāh's forgiveness.

#### **II. Introduction:**

There are a number of important principles that are encapsulated in the wisdom of the text. These principles form the foundation of a virtuous life, emphasising the transformative power of gratitude, patience, forbearance, and repentance. The key to unlocking the gates of happiness lies in the believer's ability to embody these virtues, responding to blessings with gratitude, facing trials with patience, and seeking forgiveness when falling into sin. As we delve into the exploration of these spiritual keys, we uncover

profound insights into the delicate balance that leads to a life filled with joy and fulfilment.

### III. The Text:

*Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

وَأَنْ يَجْعَلَكَ مِمَّنْ إِذَا أُعْطِيَ شَكَرَ، وَإِذَا ابْتُلِيَ صَبَرَ، وَإِذَا أَذْنَبَ اسْتَغْفَرَ. فَإِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ الثَّلَاثَ عُنْوَانُ السَّعَادَةِ	And that He makes you from those if they are given (from His blessings) he is grateful; if he tested with a tribulation (he is) patient and forbearing; and if he falls. into sin he seeks Allāh’s forgiveness and these there are from the keys of happiness.
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Gratitude (شكر): Gratitude is to show thanks upon receiving blessings from Allāh, through speech, the heart, deeds, or the limbs.
2. Tribulation (ابتلى): The Is when Allāh tests a person with trials or afflictions. This test could be with hunger, fear of a thing, personal loss or in one’s property or other than these. The objective of th test is to develop patience, perseverance, and forbearance in the servants of Allāh and a means for them to enter Paradise.
3. Patience (صبر): Patience, Islāmically, is to confine oneself to the obedience of Allāh, restraining oneself from being disobedient to him, and to refraining from becoming angry at what Allāh has decreed.
4. Sin (ذنب): Any belief, statement or action that goes against the legislation or divine commands of Allāh causing the person to

abandon or neglect that which is obligatory or to engage in those things that are prohibited and resulting in Allāh's punishment.

5. Seek forgiveness (استغفر): This is the act of seeking Allāh's forgiveness, usually, by saying: 'I seek refuge in Allāh' (Arabic, *astaghfirullaāh* [أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ]). The believer seeks refuge in Allāh from or upon committing sin and this has two important benefits: firstly, the sin is screened from public exposure and secondly, that the person is forgiven for committing the sin and not punished on account of it.

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks the keys of happiness and how they may be attained.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Describe the keys of happiness outlined in the text and their connection to expressions of gratitude.
2. Explore the concept of patience and forbearance as keys to happiness during times of tribulation.
3. Understand the role of seeking Allāh's forgiveness in the pursuit of happiness, especially when one falls into sin.
4. Recognize the relationship between being given blessings, gratitude, and the overall pursuit of happiness.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. The Keys to Happiness:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) continues his introduction to this treatise with a description of the keys to happiness. These are:

- i. Gratitude for Blessings: the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “And that He makes you from those if they are given (from His blessings) he is grateful.” This is the first key to happiness: the believer expresses gratitude and praise to Allāh when His blessings and grace are conferred upon them, regardless of number and quantity. This gratitude may be conveyed verbally, through deeds, or simply as an expression of the heart.
- ii. Patience and forbearance upon tribulation: the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “if he tested with a tribulation (he is) patient and forbearing.” So, the second of the three keys to happiness and felicity is that if the believer is tested with a trial or tribulation they are patient and exercise forbearance. They try hard to remember that faith is a vast reservoir of hope and by exercising patience one is able to take a drink of its soothing water. They struggle hard not to fall into despair and despondence but recognise that this is simply a test of faith and by being patient they may be successful in overcoming all difficulties.

- iii. Repentance and seeking forgiveness upon sinning: the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “and if he falls into sin he seeks Allāh’s forgiveness.” The third and last of these three keys of happiness is that if the believer falls into sin they seek Allāh’s forgiveness, and repent from the act of disobedience.

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “and these there are from the keys of happiness.” So, if these keys are actualised, it leads to happiness and felicity in this life as well the after-life, by Allāh’s permission.

## 2. The Fundamental Principles of Happiness:

The venerable scholar Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb az-Zur‘ī al-Dimishqī, popularly known as Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 691 AH), notes that the fundamental principles upon which happiness is built upon are three with each have a diametric opposite: firstly, *Tawḥīd* (Islāmic Monotheism) whose diametrical opposite is *shirk* or associating or making equals or partners with Allāh in His Worship, Lordship or Divine Names or Lofty Attributes; Secondly, *Sunnah* (tenaciously following the Prophet [ﷺ]) whose diametrical opposite is *Bid’ah* or heretical innovations in the religion that have not been legislated; and thirdly, obedience (Arabic, *aṭ-Ṭā’ah*) whose diametrical opposite is disobedience and sin (Arabic, *al-Ma’āṣi*).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb al-Zur‘ī, 1429, *al-Fawāa'id*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Ālim al-Fawāa'id, p. 157.

For each fundamental principle abandoned the person may fall into its diametric opposite.<sup>14</sup>

3. The Believer Alternates between these Three States:

The life of the believer alternates between three states: showing gratitude for the blessings and grace conferred upon them by Allāh; being patience when being afflicted by a trial or tribulation; and seeking Allāh's forgiveness for committing a sin.

4. Benefits from the Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this section of the introduction:

1. From the keys of happiness in this life and the next is that the believer shows gratitude when the Grace and Blessings of Allāh are conferred upon them.
2. Another key of happiness is that the believer exercises patience and forbearance when they are confronted with difficulties and hardships.
3. The other key to happiness is that the believer seeks Allāh's forgiveness if they commit a sin, and they sincerely turn to Him in repentance seeking His forgiveness.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *al-Fawās'id*, p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> The conditions and prerequisites for true repentance are: sincerity with Allāh; the feeling of regret and remorse for committing the sin; refrain from committing the sin; the resolve and determination not to commit the sin again; and the act

4. The life of the believer alternates between the above-mentioned three states.<sup>16</sup>

### VIII. Assessment:

1. What is the first key to happiness according to the text?
2. How does the believer approach trials and tribulations according to the text?
3. What action should the believer take when they fall into sin according to the text?
4. According to Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, what are the three fundamental principles upon which happiness is built?

### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“The foundations upon which the happiness of the servant is built upon are three, and each of them has an opposite. Whoever loses that foundation attains its opposite: *Tawḥīd* (Islāmic Monotheism), and its opposite is *Shirk* (associating equals or partners with Allāh); the *Sunnah*, and its opposite is *Bid'ah* (heresy); and obedience, and

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of repentance should be within the time repentance is accepted. See: Muhammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUthaymīn, 2016, *Explanation of Riyaad-us-Saliheen*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, vol. 1, pp. 82 - 94.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb al-Zurʿī, 1425, *al-Wābil-uṣ-Ṣayyib wa Rāfiʿ-ul-Kalimah at-Tayyib*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Ālim al-Fawāʾid, p. 5.

its opposite is disobedience and sin. For these three, there is one opposite, which is the emptiness of the heart from desire and fear of Allāh and what He possesses.”

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What are the three foundations upon which the happiness of the servant is built, as mentioned in the text?
2. Provide examples of the opposites of the following principles: *Tawḥīd*, *Sunnah*, and obedience.
3. Explain the concept of “the emptiness of the heart” mentioned in the text and its significance in relation to the three principles.

#### X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Give the definition of knowledge, linguistically and Islāmically.
2. What are the two essential types of knowledge?
3. What are the categories of knowledge?





## *Lesson 5:*

### *Toward a Definition of Knowledge.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. To be able to define knowledge both linguistically and Islāmically, emphasizing its role in understanding the Islāmic legislation derived from the Noble Qur'ān and authentic *Sunnah*.
2. Differentiate between essential (ضروري) and theoretical (نظري) knowledge, providing examples of each and recognizing their respective roles in comprehension.
3. Comprehend the six levels of knowledge, including the definitions of knowledge, marginal ignorance, compound ignorance, doubt, and supposition, and understand how they apply to perception.

#### **II. Introduction:**

In Islam, knowledge holds a lofty place, Seeking Islāmic knowledge is an imperative that is emphasised in several scriptural texts. In terms of Islāmic sciences, it refers to knowledge that is derived from the Noble Qur'ān and the authentic *Sunnah*. The student of Islāmic sciences is encouraged to pursue knowledge not merely as an academic endeavour but as a spiritual journey. So, what do we mean when we use the term knowledge? What are its types? What are its categories?

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

اعْلَمْ أَرْشَدَكَ اللَّهُ لِعِطَائِهِ		Know! May Allāh guide you to His obedience:
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Guidance (رشد): Islāmically, the term ‘guidance’ refers to being righteous, upright, (spiritually) rectified and the antithesis of being ‘misguided’.<sup>17</sup>
2. Obedience (طاعة): The term obedience, Islāmically, may be defined as being, to comply with the commands of Allāh and leaving that which he has prohibited.

### V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks knowledge and how it is understood in the Islāmic sciences.

### VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Understand the significance of seeking guidance from Allah in the context of obedience.
2. Recognise the role of divine guidance in shaping one's actions and behaviour.

<sup>17</sup> *Mu’jam Muṣṭalahāt ‘Ulūm-ash-Sharī’ah*, pp. vol. 2, p. 837.

3. Explore the connection between seeking Allāh's guidance and the path of obedience.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. The use of the Imperative to Know:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) begins this sentence with the imperative verb 'know'! Here, he is calling the reader to pay attention and ultimately know and learn that which follows, which is *Tawhīd*.

2. Defining Knowledge:

Linguistically, knowledge is the diametric opposite of ignorance. Islāmically, the term knowledge refers to knowledge of the Islāmic legislation, namely, knowledge derived from the Noble Qur'ān and the authentic *Sunnah* and those sciences which are related to them, which enables the believer to know and understand what is obligatory upon them from the affairs of the religion,<sup>18</sup> as the venerable scholar Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī<sup>19</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>18</sup> Muhammad ‘Alī ash-Shawkānī, nd, *Faṭḥ ar-Rabānī min Majmlū’ Fatāwa al-Imām ash-Shawkānī*. Sanaa, Yemen: Maktabah al-Jīl al-Jadīd, vol. 6, p. 2888.

<sup>19</sup> Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, born in 773 AH in Cairo, Egypt, was a renowned Islāmic scholar, jurist, and *Ḥadīth* expert, earning the title of “Ḥāfiẓ.” His prolific career included serving as the chief judge in Egypt and leaving an indelible mark on Islamic scholarship. From a young age, he excelled in memorizing the Quran and developed a passion for poetry. He later

“The intended meaning of knowledge is the religious knowledge that entails understanding what is obligatory for the accountable person in terms of their worship and transactions. It includes knowledge of Allāh and His attributes, understanding what is required in fulfilling His commands, and affirming His perfection while negating any deficiencies. The scope of this knowledge encompasses Qur’ānic exegesis, *Ḥadīth*, Islāmic law, and Islāmic jurisprudence.”<sup>20</sup>

### 3. Types of Knowledge:

The scholars have highlighted that knowledge is of two essential types: essential (ضروري) and theoretical (نظري). Essential (ضروري) knowledge is that which is known without the need for conjecture nor theoretical deduction, for example, fire is hot and can burn<sup>21</sup>. As for theoretical (نظري) knowledge it is that knowledge which is derived through investigation and the ascertaining of evidence. For example,

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devoted himself to the study of *Ḥadīth*, traveling extensively to learn from distinguished scholars. Ibn Ḥajar 's scholarly contributions were vast, with his most notable work being the comprehensive commentary on Sahih al- Bukhārī, titled “*Fatḥ al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.” His writings spanned various disciplines, showcasing his expertise in jurisprudence, biographies, and the intricacies of *Ḥadīth*. Despite facing multiple dismissals from his judicial position, Ibn Hajar remained an influential figure in the Muslim world until his passing in 852AH . His funeral drew a massive crowd, emphasizing the profound impact he had on the Islamic community and beyond. He passed away on the night of Saturday, the 28th of Dhu al-Hijjah. His funeral prayer was performed at the Mosque of the Faithful. He was buried in the Qarafa cemetery, and a procession of dignitaries walked from his home in Cairo to the burial site. His funeral was attended by an estimated fifty thousand people.

<sup>20</sup> Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, 1390 AH, *Fatḥ al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabah Salafiyyah, vol. 1, p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> *Sharḥ Ṭhalāthah al-Uṣūl*, p. 18 - 19.

the obligation of having a sincere intention when making ritual ablution.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Levels of Knowledge:

Knowledge may also be defined as being: perceiving the reality of a thing with complete certainty.<sup>23</sup> This perception or understanding has six levels: knowledge (العلم) which is to perceive the reality of a thing as it is with complete certainty; marginal ignorance (الجهل البسيط) which is the absence of complete perception of a thing; compound ignorance (الجهل المركب) which is to perceive a thing opposite to its reality; doubt (الشك) which is to perceive a thing while holding its opposite to be similarly true; supposition (الظن) which is to perceive the reality of a thing with the presence of something which is opposite to it which may be perceived to be possibly true.<sup>24</sup>

#### 5. Supplication to Attain Knowledge:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) then makes a supplication – to Allāh – that He (ﷻ) guides the reader to His obedience and worship and that which is the greatest act of worship: knowing, understanding, and practising *Tawhīd*. This is from the noble manners of the author in which he shows his care and concern

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<sup>22</sup> *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl*, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl*, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl*, p. 18.

for the reader – his student – wanting good for them in this life and the next.

6. Benefits from the Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this section of the introduction:

1. Knowledge, in respect to Islām, is derived from the Noble Qur’ān and the authentic *Sunnah*.
2. Being guided is from the greatest blessings of Allāh (ﷻ).
3. It is from the lofty manners of Islām that the teacher supplicates for the guidance of their student.
4. The student of Islāmic knowledge is foremost in being obedient to Allāh undertaking what He has obligated and staying away from what He has prohibited.
5. *Tawḥīd* is the greatest affair to which the student of Islāmic knowledge can learn, practice and teach.

**VIII. Assessment:**

1. What is the linguistic opposite of knowledge, and how is it defined in an Islāmic context?
2. Define the two essential types of knowledge and provide examples of each.

3. Explain the six levels of perception or understanding as outlined in the text.
4. How does the author differentiate between essential (ضروري) and theoretical (نظري) knowledge?

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *Imām* Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr ibn Yazīd aṭ-Ṭabarī (may Allāh have mercy upon him), when discussing the comprehensive nature of Allāh's knowledge, said:

“And Allāh is the Knower of the secrets within the hearts of His servants and what their souls conceal, which is more hidden than a secret. Nothing is hidden from Him in that regard.”

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What aspect of the servants' hearts does the text emphasise Allāh's knowledge of?
2. How is the concealment of the souls' secrets described in the text?
3. What is the significance of stating that Allāh's knowledge encompasses what is “more hidden than a secret” in the text?

## X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meanings for the term the True Religion (*Ḥanīfiyyah*).

2. What was the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm or Abraham (peace be upon him)?





## *Lesson 6:*

### *The Religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand the concept of the True Religion (*Ḥanīfiyyah*) being the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm or Abraham (peace be upon him).
2. Identify the core principle of the True Religion (*Ḥanīfiyyah*), which is the worship of Allāh - alone - and making the religion sincere for Him, alone.
3. Recognize the significance of the verse from *Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt* [51]: 56, emphasising the purpose of creation as worshipping Allāh alone.

#### **II. Introduction:**

The religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm or Abraham (peace be upon him), in its essence, is Islām: an inclination away from polytheism towards monotheism. *Ḥanīfiyyah* is Islam: the worship of Allāh alone without any partners, belief in His Scriptures and Messengers, and the Last Day. It is the essence of Islām that Allāh accepts as the only religion. The Muslim is said to be '*Ḥanīf*' due to his adherence to the truth, his inclination away from polytheism and the worship of idols towards the worship of Allāh alone and His Oneness. So, what does the term the True Religion

(*Ḥanīfiyyah*) mean? What was the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm or Abraham (peace be upon him)?

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>أَنَّ الْحَنِفِيَّةَ مِلَّةُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ، وَحْدَهُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ، كَمَا قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي﴾ (الذاريات: 56).</p>	<p>That the true religion (<i>Ḥanīfiyyah</i>) is the religion of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام): which is to worship Allāh – alone – making the religion sincere for Him, as the Exalted has said: “I have created the jinn nor humanity except to worship me alone” (<i>Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt</i> [51]: 56).</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Worship (عبادة): As a religious term it is: a comprehensive noun for all that Allāh loves and is pleased with from statement and deed that are hidden or apparent, such as, the prayer (*ṣalah*); poor alms (*ṣakah*), fasting (*ṣiyām*); and the major pilgrimage (hajj).
2. True Religion (الحنفية): The term ‘true religion’ or *Ḥanīfiyyah* (الحنفية) is derived from the Arabic word *ḥanīf* (حنيف) which linguistically, may be defined as being, ‘an inclination or leaning towards the true or orthodox religion.’<sup>25</sup> So, the term ‘true religion’ (الحنفية) may be said to be, righteousness through making the religion sincerely for Allāh,<sup>26</sup> and absolving oneself from *Shirk* and its people.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Fāris, 1399/1989, *Mu’jam Miqayyis-ul-Lughah*. Lebanon, Beirut: Dār-ul-Fikr, vol. 2, pp. 110 – 111.

<sup>26</sup> Ahmad b. Abdul-Ḥaleem ibn Taymiyyah, 1425/2004, *Majmlū’ Fatāwa Shaykh-ul-Islām Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, vol. 10, p. 466.

<sup>27</sup> *Mu’jam Muṣṭalahāt ‘Ulūm-ash-Sharī’ah*, vol.2, p. 722.

3. Religion (مِلَّة): Islāmically, the term ‘religion’ is a noun which refers to all that has been legislated by Allāh to His servants in His book – the Noble Qur’ān – and in the authentic *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ).<sup>28</sup>
4. Sincerely (مخلصاً): The purifying of one’s intention and volition by making all deeds and statements solely for the sake of Allāh.<sup>29</sup>

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks the religion of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and its foundations.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Describe the concept of the True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*) and its connection to Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).
2. Explore the core principle of the True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*), emphasising the worship of Allāh alone and the sincerity in the religion.
3. Understand the significance of the verse from *Sūrah* adh-Dhāriyāt [51]: 56 in relation to the purpose of human creation and worshipping Allāh, alone.

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<sup>28</sup> *Mu’jam Muṣṭalahāt ‘Ulūm-ash-Shari’ah*, vol.3, pp. 1312 - 1613.

<sup>29</sup> *Mu’jam Muṣṭalahāt ‘Ulūm-ash-Shari’ah*, vol.1, p. 92.

4. Recognise the monotheistic foundation of the True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*) and its alignment with the teachings of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. Definition of the True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “That the true religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*) is the religion of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).” Linguistically, the Arabic word “*Ḥanifiyyah*” is derived from the word “*Ḥanif*,” which refers to the bending of the foot. This is done by turning each foot towards the other with the big toe, and due to this, Aḥanif ibn Qays was named due to his bent feet. “*Ḥanif*,” also signifies inclination or leaning. As a religious term it means, “*Ḥanifiyyah*” in general is Islām: worshiping Allāh alone without partners, believing in His Scriptures, His Messengers, and the Last Day. It is the essence of Islām that Allāh accepts as the only religion. The opposite to “*Ḥanifiyyah*” is *Shirk* or associating partners or equals with Allāh. Therefore, whoever abandons “*Ḥanifiyyah*” or the True Religion becomes one of those who associate partners with Allāh.

2. The Religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him):

Prophet Ibrāhīm or Abraham (peace be upon him) as he is known in Judeo-Christian tradition, was: Ibrāhīm ibn Āzar (also known as

Tārakh) ibn Nrāḥūr ibn Sārūgh ibn Rāghū ibn Fālaq ibn Ābar ibn Sālikh ibn Arfakhshad ibn Sām ibn Nūḥ (peace be upon him).

i. The Mission of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him):

Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) called his people to worshiping Allāh alone, abandoning the worship of idols and celestial bodies. His people were people of polytheism and disbelief. He started his call with his father because he was closest to him and most deserving of sincere advice. He addressed him with gentle words and the finest gestures.

ii. The Religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him):

The religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) is characterised as being monotheistic in which all acts of worship were undertaken for the sake of Allāh – alone – without associating partners or equals with Him in any aspect of its understanding or performance.

3. The Antithesis of the Religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him):

The antithesis of the Religion of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) – Islām – is *shirk* in which acts of worship are either devoted to other than Allāh or are dedicated to Allāh and simultaneously to other than Allāh being seen as partners or equals with Him. The monotheist not only implements and lives by *Tawḥīd*, in every aspect

of their lives, they also remain cautious of *shirk* and all of its manifestations.

4. Supplication of the Author for the Reader's Guidance:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) then makes a supplication - to Allāh – asking that the reader is guided to the obedience and sincere worship of Allāh. The sincere worship of Allāh is underpinned by *Tawḥīd* and is done with total and absolute devotion and sincerity to Allāh - alone.

5. The Concept of Worship in Islām

Another issue the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) brings to our attention is the importance of the correct understanding of what constitutes worship in Islām.

i. Comprehensive Definition of Worship in Islām:

Worship in Islām is a comprehensive and central aspect of the faith, encompassing a diverse range of acts, beliefs and rituals that reflect the submission, devotion, and obedience of believers to Allāh. Perhaps one of the most comprehensive definitions of worship or *'Ibādah* is that of *Shaykh-ul-Islām* Ibn Taymīyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him) who said:

“Worship is a comprehensive noun for all that Allāh loves and is pleased with from statement and deed that are hidden or apparent, such as, the prayer (*ṣalah*); poor

alms (*zakah*), fasting (*siyām*); the major pilgrimage (hajj); honesty in speech; taking care of what is entrusted; kindness to one's parents; maintaining family ties; fulfilling trusts; enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is evil; striving against the hypocrites and disbelievers; kindness to one's neighbours, orphans, the poor, travellers, those in bondage from humans and animals; supplication (*Du'ā*); remembrance (*dhikr*) and reciting (the Noble Qur'ān) and the like are (all considered to be part) of worship. Similarly, loving Allāh and His messenger (ﷺ); reverence of Allāh; turning repentantly to Him; making the religion sincerely for Him; patience with His ordinances; being grateful for His blessings; being pleased with His decree; relying upon Him; having hope in His Mercy; fear of His punishment and similar to that is (to be considered) from the worship of to Allāh”<sup>30</sup>.

ii. The Essence of Worship in Islām:

The essence of worship: Sincere devotion of the religion to Allāh, submitting to Him, obeying, loving, fearing, hoping, desiring, entrusting affairs to Him, relying on Him, obeying His messengers, following them, and complying with their orders while avoiding prohibitions. This is the true essence of the Islām that Allāh sent through the earlier and later

<sup>30</sup> Ahmad b. Abdul-Ḥaleem ibn Taymiyyah, 1426/2005, *Risālah al-'Uḥūdiyyah*. Lebanon, Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī. p. 44.

messengers, the religion that Allāh accepts from no one but him. It embodies the reality of worship to the Lord of all creation, as Islam means surrendering to Allāh, encompassing the utmost submission in humility and obedience.

6. Understanding *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt (56):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents verse 56 from *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt as scriptural evidence for the *modus operandi* of all of the creation – particularly humans – which is the worship of Allāh – alone – without ascribing partners or equals to Him in this worship. We may develop a greater and deeper understanding of this verse by looking at its exegesis and some of the benefits that may be derived from it:

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt (56): as-Si‘dī:

Commenting on this verse, the venerable scholar Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir as-Si‘dī states: (may Allāh have mercy upon him):

“This is the purpose for which Allāh created the jinn<sup>31</sup> and humankind, and sent all the Messengers to call to it, namely, to worship Him alone, which implies

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<sup>31</sup> They are creation who Allāh created from smokeless fire, they are intelligent and possess freedom of active will. They reproduce and bear responsibilities in a manner similar to humans, yet they do not possess specific attributes or characteristics inherent to humans or others. However, they are not perceived in their nature or true form, and they have the ability to shape-shift and possess other creatures.



knowing Him, loving Him, turning to Him and turning away from all others.”<sup>32</sup>

i. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* adh-Dhāriyāt (56):

Some of the benefits derived from this noble verse are:

1. Both jinn and humans were created to worship Allāh, giving a straightforward understanding of why we exist.
2. Messengers were sent to guide people toward the worship of Allāh.
3. Worship encompasses understanding, love, repentance, devotion, and exclusive focus on Allāh while avoiding all partners and ascribing equals in this.
4. Having knowledge about Allāh is crucial for perfecting worship. Similarly, increased knowledge enhances worship.
5. Allāh created beings without any need for them underscores His self-sufficiency and their being fully dependent upon Him.

7. Benefit from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

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<sup>32</sup> Abdur-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'di, 2018, *Tafseer as-Sa'di. Riyadh*, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Publishing House, vol. 9, p. 306.

1. The religion of Ibrāhīm is characterised by *Tawḥīd* and it is in opposition to all other religions, as they are based upon *shirk*, even if they ascribe their origins to him (peace be upon him).
2. *Shirk* is the antithesis of the religion of Ibrāhīm and the Monotheist is careful of its manifestations.
3. Worship is a comprehensive term that includes statement, belief and deed that may be latent or manifest, all being underpinned by *Tawḥīd*.
4. The reason for bringing the creation into existence is to worship Allāh – alone – in accordance with *Tawḥīd*.

#### VIII. Assessment:

1. Describe the fundamental concept of True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*), elucidating its roots in the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him).
2. Explore the foundational principle of the True Religion (*Ḥanifiyyah*), focusing on the exclusive worship of Allāh and the genuine sincerity embedded in this belief system.
3. Understand the profound significance of *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt [51]: 56, delving into its connection with the purpose of human creation and the core tenet of worshipping Allāh alone.

#### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah<sup>33</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“Worship combines two essential elements: the pinnacle of love with the utmost humility and submission. The Arabs say, “A well-trodden path,” meaning being submissive. Worship entails humility and submission. If you love someone but are not submissive to them, you are not truly devoted to them. Similarly, if you submit to someone without love, you are not truly devoted to them until you become both a loving and submissive devotee.”<sup>34</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. Describe the dual aspects that worship combines, as mentioned in the text.
2. Explain the significance of the Arab expression "A well-trodden path" in the context of worship and submission.
3. Discuss the relationship between love, submission, and true devotion in the concept of worship.
4. How does the text emphasize the necessity of both love and submission for genuine worship?

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<sup>33</sup> He Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb az-Zur‘ī d-Dimashqī l-Ḥanbalī, known as Abu Abdullah and titled Shams ad-Din. Ibn al-Qayyim was born on the seventh day of the month of Safar in the year 691 H. He grew up in a household of knowledge and virtue, instilled with love for learning and scholars. The environment in which he was raised had a significant impact on directing his life towards the pursuit of knowledge, leading him to attain the honor of leadership in this religion through excellence and competence. He was a great scholar known for his mastery of a wide number of Islāmic sciences. He was a student of the great scholar Shaykh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allāh have mercy upon him). He passed away, may Allah have mercy on him, on the last evening of the thirteenth day of the month of Rajab in the year 751 AH. He was prayed upon at the Grand Mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus after the Dhuhr prayer. Subsequently, a second prayer was held for him at the Jirajah Mosque, and he was buried in the Bab al-Saghir Cemetery in Damascus.

<sup>34</sup> *Madārij as-Sālikin*, vol. 1, p. 130.

## X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meanings for the terms: *Tawḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism.
2. Mention the importance of *Aqīdah* or the Islāmic Creed in both the worldly and after life.



## *Lesson 7:*

### *Understanding Tawḥīd and its Antithesis Shirk.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand why Allāh created humans, focusing on the central role of worship in their existence.
2. Explore how genuine worship is intricately linked with *Tawḥīd*, recognizing *Tawḥīd*'s crucial role.
3. Identify that worship lacks authenticity without *Tawḥīd*, similar to how prayer requires ritual purification.
4. Analyse the consequences of introducing *Shirk* into worship, drawing parallels with the corruption caused by ritual impurity.

#### **II. Introduction:**

Embarking on an exploration of the text, we delve into the fundamental purpose of human creation: worshipping Allāh. The text shows that there is a deep connection between worship and *Tawḥīd*, emphasising the importance of *Tawḥīd* in true worship. We will also learn that one's implementation of *Tawḥīd* can be corrupted by *Shirk*, drawing parallels with ritual impurity in ritual purification. By understanding these intricate theological concepts, we gain insight into the profound implications they hold for worship and the human connection with the divine. May Allāh

have mercy upon the author for imparting such enlightening wisdom. So, what does the term *Tawhīd* mean? What is *Shirk*? Can one's implementation of *Tawhīd* become corrupted by *Shirk*?

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>فَإِذَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَكَ لِعِبَادَتِهِ؛ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْعِبَادَةَ لَا تُسَمَّى عِبَادَةً إِلَّا مَعَ التَّوْحِيدِ، كَمَا أَنَّ الصَّلَاةَ لَا تُسَمَّى صَلَاةً إِلَّا مَعَ الطَّهَارَةِ، فَإِذَا دَخَلَ الشِّرْكُ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ فَسَدَتْ، كَالْحَدَثِ إِذَا دَخَلَ فِي الطَّهَارَةِ</p>	<p>So, if you know that Allāh created you for His worship, then know! Worship is not termed worship except with <i>Tawhīd</i> as the prayer is not termed prayer except with ritual purification, so if <i>shirk</i> enters into worship then it corrupts like ritual impurity if it enters into ritual purification.</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. *Tawhīd* or Islāmic Monotheism (التَّوْحِيد): Linguistically, the term ‘*Tawhīd*’ or Islāmic Monotheism means to ‘make something one’ or ‘unitary’.<sup>35</sup> Islāmically, *Tawhīd* is to single Allāh out in that which is specific and unique to Him (ﷻ) in respect to His worship, Lordship and His Divine Names and Lofty Attributes.<sup>36</sup>
2. *Shirk* or Polytheism (الشِّرْك): Linguistically, the term polytheism or *shirk* means to associate, share, create or to make partners with a thing<sup>37</sup>. Islāmically, it means to associate, share, create or to assign

<sup>35</sup> Abdullah b. Abdul-Azīz al-Jibrīn, 1433, *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabah ar-Rushd, p. 97; Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, 2005, *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*. Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, pp. 17 – 41.

<sup>36</sup> Abdur-Razzāq Abdul-Muḥsin al-'Abād, *al-Qaṣṣah-ul-Sadīd fī ar-Radd 'ala man Ankar Taqsim-ut-Tawḥīd*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn 'Affān, p. 16; *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*, pp. 17 – 41. *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99.

<sup>37</sup> *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*, p. 43; *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 97.

partners with Allāh in that which is unique and specific to Him, particularly, in respect to His worship, Lordship and His Divine Names and Attributes.<sup>38</sup>

3. Ritual Purification (الطهارة): Linguistically, ‘*Tahārah*’ or Ritual Purification means ‘purity.’ Islāmically, the term may be defined as being, ‘ablution of specific body parts in a specific way’ or as being ‘cessation of ritual impurity or (physical) impurity’.<sup>39</sup> Being in a state of *Tahārah* or Ritual Purity permits the worshipper to undertake acts of worship that obligate ritual purity, such as, the prayer (*Ṣalah*)<sup>40</sup>.
4. Ritual Impurity (حدث): Linguistically, the term ‘*Hadath*’ or ritual impurity means ‘an occurrence’. Islāmically, ritual impurity is the termination of ritual purity leading to the impermissibility of prayer and its related acts of worship. The scholars have divided ritual impurity into two essential categories: *al-Hadath-ul-Asghar* or the Minor Ritual Impurity, which is related to impurity that obligates ablution of specific parts of the body by wuḍū’ or minor ritual purification, while *al-Hadath-ul-Akbar* or Major Ritual Impurity necessitates the ablution of the whole body.<sup>41</sup>

## V. Lesson Summary:

<sup>38</sup> A *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*, pp. 17 – 41; *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-‘Aqidah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99; Salih al-Fowzan, 2005, *Guide to sound Creed*. Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: al-Maiman Publishing House, p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 1410/1990, *al-Muwṣū‘ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kurwaitiyyah*. Kuwait: Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, vol. 17, p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> *al-Muwṣū‘ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kurwaitiyyah*, vol. 29, p. 91.

<sup>41</sup> *al-Muwṣū‘ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kurwaitiyyah*, vol. 17, p. 107.

This lesson looks the importance of *Tawḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism and how it is corrupted by *Shirk* or associating partners or equals with Allāh.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Describe the purpose for which Allāh created humans according to the text.
2. Explore the relationship between worship and *Tawḥīd* as explained in the passage.
3. Understand how one's implementation of *Tawḥīd* can become corrupted by *Shirk*.
5. Explore the consequences of *Shirk* corrupting worship, drawing parallels with ritual impurity in ritual purification.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. The Obligation and Importance of Worship in Islām:

- i. The Obligation of Worship in Islam:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “So, if you know that Allāh created you for His worship. Here we learn that worshipping Allāh is an obligatory duty, as humans were created specifically for this purpose. This worship is reserved for the deity deserving reverence, possessing attributes like being a Creator, Provider, Administrator of the affairs, and



Omnipotent Authority— all of these are qualities unique to Allāh, alone without partners nor equals. Worshiping Allāh alone, without associating partners, embodies the oneness in His Lordship, Worship and Divinity, and His divine Names and Lofty Attributes.

ii. The Importance of Worship in Islām:

The essence of the religion is encapsulated in the concept of worship, representing sincere devotion to Allāh in Islām. All messengers emphasised exclusive worship of Allāh, and genuine religious commitment involves recognizing servitude to Allāh in all aspects of life, fostering love for Him. Increased dedication to Allāh's worship deepens the connection between the servant and the Almighty, leading to true contentment in both this life and the afterlife through wholehearted commitment to Islām. The completeness of one's servitude is directly proportional to the sincerity in their devotion to Allāh.

iii. The Pillars of Worship:

The essential components of worship encompass three pillars: love, fear, and hope. These pillars form the foundation of genuine and meaningful worship.

iv. The Prerequisite Conditions of Worship:

For worship to be accepted by Allāh, beneficial to the worshipper, and a means of salvation in both this world and the Hereafter, three conditions must be met:

1. Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*).
2. Sincerity to Allah (*Ikhlāṣ*).
2. Following the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) (*Muṭābi'ah*).

These three conditions are the central pivot of this religion, serving as the foundation for the well-being of individuals in both worlds.

## 2. The Relationship between *Tawḥīd* and Worship:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “then know! Worship is not termed worship except with *Tawḥīd*.” Here the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) begins to discuss *Tawḥīd* and its inextricable relationship to worship.

### i. Islāmic Monotheism or *Tawḥīd* Defined:

*Tawḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism (التوحيد): Linguistically, the term '*Tawḥīd*' or Islāmic Monotheism means to 'make something one' or 'unitary'.<sup>42</sup> Islāmically, *Tawḥīd* is to single Allāh out in that which is specific and unique to Him (ﷻ) in respect to His worship, Lordship and His Divine Names and Lofty Attributes.<sup>43</sup>

### ii. The Relationship Between *Tawḥīd* and Worship:

<sup>42</sup> Abdullah b. Abdul-Azīz al-Jibrīn, 1433, *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabah ar-Rushd, p. 97; Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, 2005, *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*. Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, pp. 17 – 41.

<sup>43</sup> Abdur-Razzāq Abdul-Muḥsin al-'Abād, *al-Qawl-us-Sadīd fī ar-Radd 'ala man Ankar Taqīm-ut-Tawḥīd*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn 'Affān, p. 16; *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*, pp. 17 – 41. *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99.

There is an inextricable link between worship and *Tawḥīd*, as worship serves as the cornerstone of *Tawḥīd*. The crux of *Tawḥīd* lies in dedicating all acts of worship to Allāh alone without ascribing partners or equals to Him. It is unimaginable for an individual to solely devote themselves to Allāh in worship without embracing the *Tawḥīd* of lordship. This involves singling out Allāh in matters of creation, sustenance, and sovereignty, alongside acknowledging His names and attributes. Any deficiency in singling out Allāh in lordship or affirming His names and attributes simultaneously impacts the *Tawḥīd* of Worship.

### 3. The Danger of *Shirk* in Worship:

#### i. Definition of *Shirk* or Polytheism:

*Shirk* or Polytheism (الشرك): Linguistically, the term polytheism or *shirk* means to associate, share, create or to make partners with a thing.<sup>44</sup> Islāmically, it means to associate, share, create or to assign partners with Allāh in that which is unique and specific to Him, particularly, in respect to His worship, Lordship and His Divine Names and Attributes.<sup>45</sup>

#### ii. An Analogy of the Danger of *Shirk* in Worship:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “then know! Worship is not termed worship except with *Tawḥīd* as

<sup>44</sup> *The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*, p. 43; *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 97.

<sup>45</sup> *A The Fundamentals of Tawḥeed*, pp. 17 – 41; *Sharḥ Tashīl-al-'Aqīdah-ul-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99; Salih al-Fowzan, 2005, *Guide to sound Creed*. Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: al-Maiman Publishing House, p. 41.

the prayer is not termed prayer except with ritual purification, so if *shirk* enters into worship then it corrupts like ritual impurity if it enters into ritual purification.” The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) develops the reader’s understanding of the importance of *Tawhīd* and its categories using analogy to clarify the danger of *Shirk* to the practice and understanding of *Tawhīd*. Using analogy, the author is able to construct a clear and lucid picture of the issue at hand.

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) uses an analogy to illustrate not only the dangers of *Shirk* and, importantly, its corrupting and destructive nature. So, in the case of *Ṣalah* or the prayer, being in a state of ritual impurity does not permit the performance of prayer and obligates ritual purity if the worshipper intends to undertake the prayer. He notes that the same way falling into ritual impurity renders an act of worship null and void and obligates ritual purity, by analogy, *Shirk* has a similar effect upon *Tawhīd*.

After presenting the analogy of *Ṣalah* and ritual impurity, the author uses this to illustrate the effect and impact *Shirk* may have upon *Tawhīd*. The author notes, that when the person falls into *Shirk*, it corrupts their practice and understanding of *Tawhīd*. So, if someone falls into *Shirk-ul-Akbar* or major polytheism without repenting from it, then their deeds will be rendered null and void, leaving the fold of Islām, being cast into the hellfire eternally. Likewise, if someone falls into *Shirk-ul-Asgbar* or minor polytheism then

the deed effected will be rendered null and void while the person does not necessarily leave the fold of Islām.

3. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

1. *Tawḥīd* is the greatest obligation upon the believer and the pinnacle of one's practice and understanding of Islām.
2. *Tawḥīd* is to single Allāh out in that which is specific and unique to Him (ﷻ) in respect to His worship, Lordship and His Divine Names and Lofty Attributes.
3. *Shirk* is the greatest of sins and the potential nullifier of good deeds.
4. *Shirk* means to associate, share, create or to assign partners or equals with Allāh in that which is unique and specific to Him (ﷻ), particularly, in respect to His worship, Lordship and Divine Names and Lofty Attributes.
5. Falling into *Shirk-ul-Asghar* – Minor Polytheism - nullifies the intended deed.
6. Falling into *Shirk-ul-Akbar* – Major Polytheism – may result in one leaving the fold of Islam and entering the fire if one does not repent before death.
7. Prayer cannot be undertaken if the worshipper is not in a state of ritual purification.

## VIII. Assessment:

1. Describe the two conditions that must be met for worship to be accepted by Allāh, beneficial to the worshipper, and a means of salvation.
2. Explore the relationship between *Tawḥīd* and worship as explained in the text, emphasizing the significance of dedicating all acts of worship to Allāh alone.
3. Provide an analogy to illustrate the impact of *Shirk* on *Tawḥīd*, drawing parallels with the analogy of ritual impurity in prayer.
4. Analyse the categories of *Shirk* and their consequences, explaining the difference between Minor *Shirk* and Major *Shirk*.

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar Dr. Muḥammad Khalil Harrās<sup>46</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“Tawhid: It is a characteristic of Allāh, the Almighty. It can either be *Tawḥīd* in His Divinity, meaning that He is the true worshipped deity, deserving hearts to glorify Him with love, reverence, awe, and hope. He is to be worshiped and sanctified alone, and religion should

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<sup>46</sup> He is the great *Imām*, the supporter of the *Sunnah*, and the suppressor of innovation, Shaykh Dr. Muḥammad Khalil Harrās (may Allāh have mercy upon him). He was born in the year 1915 CE in the town of Al-Shin, Qutur Center, Gharbia Governorate. He began his education at the Azhar University in 1926 CE and graduated from the College of Islāmic Theology in 1940. The subject of his thesis was: “Ibn Taymiyyah: The Salafi.” He later served as a professor at the College of Islamic Theology and was appointed by the esteemed scholar Abdul-‘Azīz bin Abdullah bin Bāz (may Allāh have mercy upon him). to teach Islāmic creed in Mecca. He held the position of the head of the Department of Islamic Creed at the Faculty of Islāmic Law at Umm Al-Qura University (and he was the one who established this department). He passed away in September 1975 after a life full of dedication and serving Islam.

be devoted solely to Him in everything that commands or forbids His servants. This type is derived from the term *Tawḥīd* when expressed, given its significance. It is the *Tawḥīd* that the prophets, may peace and blessings be upon them, called their nations to and fought for. It is the purpose for which Allāh created all of creation.”<sup>47</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. Describe the dual aspects that worship combines, as mentioned in the text.
1. What is the concept of *Tawḥīd* as described in the text?
2. How is *Tawḥīd* related to the divinity of All *Tawḥīd* h, according to the passage?
3. Why is *Tawḥīd* considered crucial and significant, as indicated in the text?
4. What is the connection between *Tawḥīd* and the purpose for which All *Tawḥīd* h created all of creation, as mentioned in the passage?

## X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meanings for the following terms: *Tawḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism; *Aqīdah* or the Islāmic Creed; *Ibādah* or worship.

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<sup>47</sup> ‘*Aqīdatunā ‘Aqīdah Tawḥīd al-Qur’ān wa as-Sunnah*, p. 29.

2. Mention the importance of *Aqīdah* or the Islāmic Creed in both the worldly and after life.





## *Lesson 8:*

### *Worship is Corrupted by Shirk or Polytheism.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand the concept of Polytheism or *Shirk* and its severe consequences on worship, including the corruption and nullification of good deeds.
2. Recognise the significance of safeguarding worship from the contamination of Polytheism or *Shirk* and the potential nullification of deeds.
3. Appreciate the gravity of Polytheism or *Shirk* and its associated risks, including eternal residence in the Hellfire.
4. Internalise the importance of seeking protection from falling into the traps of Polytheism or *Shirk* and the role of recognition and understanding in avoiding such pitfalls.

#### **II. Introduction:**

In exploring the profound dimensions of worship, it becomes imperative to delve into the dangerous nature of Polytheism or *Shirk* and its far-reaching consequences on the purity of acts of worship and devotion. When embarking on this journey, it is important to comprehend the severity of *Shirk* and its potential to corrupt our deeds, casting a shadow over the very

essence of worship. Recognising the paramount importance of safeguarding worship from the contamination of *Shirk*, it is crucial to unravel the intricate threads that, if left unchecked, could lead to the nullification of one's most sincere efforts. The gravity of *Shirk* is not to be underestimated as we navigate through the associated risks, including the haunting possibility of eternal residence in the Hellfire. Through this exploration, we strive to internalize the urgency of seeking protection from the subtle traps of *Shirk*, understanding its nuances and pitfalls. In doing so, we pave the way for a more profound and guarded connection with our Creator, escaping the clutches of *Shirk* and ensuring the authenticity of our worship. So, what are the dangers of *Shirk*? How can it corrupt worship? How can the believer protect themselves from the traps of *Shirk*?

### III. The Text:

*Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>إِذَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ الشِّرْكَ إِذَا خَالَطَ الْعِبَادَةَ أَفْسَدَهَا، وَأَخْبِطَ الْعَمَلَ، وَصَارَ صَاحِبُهُ، مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ فِي النَّارِ. عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ أَهَمَّ مَا عَلَيْكَ مَعْرِفَةُ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُخَلِّصَكَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الشَّبَكَةِ، وَهِيَ الشِّرْكُ بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ: ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾ [النساء: 116]. وَذَلِكَ بِمَعْرِفَةِ أَرْبَعِ قَوَاعِدَ ذَكَرَهَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِي كِتَابِهِ.</p>	<p>So, if you understand that <i>Shirk</i> if it mixes with worship it corrupts it, renders deeds null and void and the person becomes from those who eternally reside in the (hell)fire, you will know that what is most important upon you to understand (is to) recognise this perhaps Allāh will save you from this net, and it is polytheism and associating partners with Allāh (<i>shirk</i>) which Allāh -The Exalted – said about: ﴿Indeed, Allāh forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom he pleases﴾ (<i>Sūrah an-Nisā'</i> [4]: 116) and that is by understanding four principles Allāh -The Exalted – has mentioned them in His Book (i.e, the Noble Qur’ān).</p>
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#### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Understanding (معرفة): Linguistically, the term '*ma'rifah*' or 'understanding' means to possess perception, awareness, understanding of the reality of a thing. Another definition of the term '*ma'rifah*' or 'understanding' is 'knowledge, particularly, knowledge that is preceded by ignorance.'<sup>48</sup> It is often used as a synonym for the term 'knowledge' or in Arabic, '*ilm*'.<sup>49</sup>
2. Hellfire (النَّار) or *Nār* in the Arabic language, is used to refer to the abode prepared by Allāh for the hypocrites and disbelievers who rejected His guidance, disobeyed His laws, and denied His messengers. It is the punishment in which His enemies are tormented, and the prison in which wrongdoers are imprisoned.

#### V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks the dangers of Polytheism or *Shirk* and its corruption and destruction of worship.

#### VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Describe the impact of Polytheism or *Shirk* on worship, specifically how it corrupts and nullifies deeds.
2. Explore the consequences of Polytheism or *Shirk*, including the potential eternal residence in the Hellfire.

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<sup>48</sup> *al-Muwsū'ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kurwaitiyyah*, vol. 29, p. 78.

<sup>49</sup> *al-Muwsū'ah-ul-al-fiqhiyyah al-Kurwaitiyyah*, vol. 3, p. 1573.

3. Understand the importance of recognizing the dangers of Polytheism or *Shirk* in order to seek protection from it.
4. Recognise the significance of separating polytheism and associating partners with Allāh (*Shirk*) from pure worship.
5. Explore the idea of understanding Polytheism or *Shirk* as a crucial aspect that Allāh may save individuals from.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

### 1. *Tawḥīd* Elevates Worship:

*Tawḥīd*, the belief in the oneness of Allāh, enhances and uplifts the nature of worship, bringing every action and word to a focal point of sincerity. When *Tawḥīd* is present, each deed and statement aligns with the true path of worship: an act of devotion dedicated to the One True Creator. On the contrary, if worship lacks *Tawḥīd*, even when conducted with precision in terms of method, location, or timing, it loses its completeness and efficacy. Without the essence of *Tawḥīd*, worship becomes incomplete and may even be considered null and void, as the crucial element of dedicating it solely to Allāh is missing.

### 2. The Corrupting Influence of *Shirk*:

- i. Polytheism or *Shirk* is the Dimetric Opposite of *Tawḥīd*:

The esteemed author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) underscores a fundamental principle in the Islāmic creed, emphasising the stark contrast between *Tawḥīd* and *Shirk*. It is incumbent upon the believer to grasp the profound dichotomy that exists between these two concepts, recognising them as diametric opposites that stand in direct opposition to each other. *Tawḥīd*, representing the absolute oneness and unity of Allāh, is diametrically opposed to Polytheism or *Shirk*, which involves associating partners with Allāh. This essential understanding forms the bedrock of Islamic monotheism, urging believers to embrace *Tawḥīd* wholeheartedly while shunning the perilous path of Polytheism or *Shirk*. In recognizing this stark contrast, the believer navigates the spiritual landscape with discernment, safeguarding their faith and ensuring unwavering devotion to the singular and supreme Creator: Allāh.

ii. *Shirk* Corrupts *Tawḥīd*:

The respected author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “So, if you understand that *Shirk* if it mixes with worship it corrupts it, renders deeds null and void and the person becomes from those who eternally reside in the (hell)fire.” Here, the esteemed author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) underscores the insidious and corrosive nature of *Shirk*, highlighting it as a malevolent force that relentlessly erodes the very essence of virtuous deeds. This nefarious influence, akin to a relentless erosion, not only nullifies the inherent

goodness of actions but also acts as a catalyst for severe repercussions, ultimately leading the individual towards the perilous destination of the Hellfire. Allāh - the Exalted – warns:

﴿لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

“If you should associate [anything] with Allāh, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.”

(*Sūrah az-Zumar* [39]: 65)

iii. Safeguarding from Polytheism or *Shirk*:

The esteemed author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “you will know that what is most important upon you to understand (is to) recognise this perhaps Allāh will save you from this net, and it is polytheism and associating partners with Allāh (*shirk*) which Allāh.” Here, the author (ﷺ) outlines the danger of Polytheism or *Shirk*, using the analogy of a net which ensnares the believer drawing them into its clutches, ensuring them with little room to move or escape, leading to destruction in this life and the next. The vivid imagery used by the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) highlights the gradual but destructive impact of Polytheism or *Shirk*, emphasising the urgency of recognising and safeguarding oneself from its pervasive influence to ensure the preservation of one's righteous deeds.

iv. *Tawḥīd* is the Safeguard from *Shirk*:

*Tawḥīd* grants the believer safety – from misguidance, disbelief, and immorality – in this life and eternal punishment in the fire of hell in the next life. Conversely, *Shirk* imperials the person causing them to fall into misguidance, deviation, and immorality – in this life – and severe punishment in the grave<sup>50</sup> and punishment in the fire of hell in the next life.

3. Understanding *Sūrah* an-Nisā' (116):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents verse 116 from *Sūrah* an-Nisā' as scriptural evidence for the aforementioned point.

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* an-Nisā' (116):

Commenting on this verse as-Si' dī (ﷺ) states:

“Allāh will not forgive the sin of ascribing partners to Him, because this is a grave insult to the Lord of the worlds and a denial of His oneness; it implies regarding the created being who possesses no power to ward off harm from, or benefit, himself as equal to the One Who is in control and possesses the power to bring benefit or cause harm, the only One from Whom blessings come, and no one can ward off harm but He; He is utterly

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<sup>50</sup> That is, the torment of the grave which refers to the endless pain and distress faced by some individuals after death, from the causes of punishment of the grave is the person dying upon shirk or hypocrisy, that is, outwardly feigning Islām while hating it or detesting something from it.

perfect in all aspects and completely independent of all needs.”<sup>51</sup>

ii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt (56):

Some of the benefits derived from this noble verse are:

1. The unforgivable nature of polytheism or *Shirk*, emphasising its gravity.
2. polytheism or *Shirk* involves the demeaning Allāh by equating Him with creation.
3. polytheism or *Shirk* deludes the helpless creation into believing that it or someone or something from the creation has control over harm and benefit, equating it with Allāh.
4. The severe injustice of diverting any part of worship – which is exclusively for Allāh – to a creation lacking perfection, self-sufficiency, or independence.
5. Sins other than *Shirk* are subject to Allāh's will, either forgiven by His mercy or subject to His justice and wisdom.

4. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

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<sup>51</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 2, p. 280.



1. The believer should be aware and attentive to the dangers of polytheism or *Shirk* as it can unexpectedly entrap or ensure them.
2. polytheism or *Shirk* can manifest itself in a number of ways and so the believer needs to be aware of it and its manifestations.
3. Knowledge, understanding and the practice of *Tawḥīd* is an antidote to polytheism or *Shirk* saving the believer from its traps and snares.
4. *Tawḥīd* grants safety for the believer in this life and the next while polytheism or *Shirk* imperials the person in this life and the next.
5. polytheism or *Shirk* erodes and chips away at good deeds and is one of the greatest of all sins.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. How does *Tawḥīd* enhance the nature of worship?
2. What fundamental principle does the esteemed author emphasise regarding *Tawḥīd* and *Shirk*?
3. How does the author use the analogy of a net to describe the danger of *Shirk*?
4. According to the exegesis of Sūrah an-Nisā' (116), why is *Shirk* considered unforgivable?

5. What benefits may be derived from *Sūrah* adh-Dhārīyāt (56) regarding the nature of Shirk and forgiveness?

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *Imām* al-Qurṭubī<sup>52</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“The root of forbidden *Shirk* is the belief in a partner to Allāh in divinity, which is the greatest form of *Shirk* known as the major *Shirk*. Following it in significance is the belief in a partner to Allāh in action, which is the statement of someone who claims that there exists a being other than Allāh that independently initiates actions and brings them into existence, even if they do not consider it as a deity.”<sup>53</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What is the root of forbidden *Shirk* according to the provided text?
2. How is the major *Shirk* defined in the text?
3. In terms of significance, what follows the belief in a partner to Allāh in divinity?
4. What is the major *Shirk* also known as in the text?

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<sup>52</sup> He is Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, also known as Abu Abū Abdu llah al-Qurṭubī i, is among the prominent interpreters of the Noble Qur’ān. He was a righteous and devout man hailing from Cordoba in Al-Andalus. He embarked on a journey to the East and settled in Muniyat Ibn Khaseeb, located in the north of Assiut, Egypt, where he passed away. One of his notable works is: *al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*. (*al-Ilām*, vol. 5, p. 322).

<sup>53</sup> *al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 5, p. 181.

5. How is the belief in a partner to Allāh in action described in the text?

**X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:**

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meanings for the following terms: *Taṭwḥīd* or Islāmic Monotheism; *Aqīdah* or the Islāmic Creed; *Ibādah* or worship.
2. Discuss the importance of *Aqīdah* or the Islāmic Creed in both the worldly and after life.



## *Lesson 9:*

### *Commentary on the First Principle.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand that while the disbelievers acknowledged that Allāh was the Creator and Disposer of Affairs, however, this was not sufficient for them to enter into Islām.
2. Recognise that affirming oneness in Allāh's Lordship obligates the affirmation of oneness in His Worship.
3. Reflect on how the disbelievers acknowledged that Allāh' was the sole Creator and Disposer of Affairs but, this did not stop them from associating partners with Him, particularly, in His worship.

#### **II. Introduction:**

In studying the intricacies of *Tawḥīd*, it becomes evident that mere acknowledgment of Allāh as the Creator and Disposer of Affairs does not guarantee entry into Islām. Despite the disbelievers' recognition of Allāh as the sole Creator and Disposer of Affairs, this alone proved insufficient for embracing Islām. It is crucial to recognise that affirming the oneness of All Disposer of Affairs h's Lordship entails a greater obligation—the acknowledgment of oneness in His Worship. Delving into this nuanced relationship between acknowledgment and acceptance, one finds that the

disbelievers, despite acknowledging Allāh's exclusive role in creation and affairs, still fell into the pitfall of *Shirk* and associating partners with Him, particularly in the realm of worship. So, what is the oneness in Allāh's Lordship? Does affirming Allāh's Lordship obligate affirming oneness in His worship?

### III. The Text:

*Imām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>أَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ الْكُفَّارَ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - مُقْرُونَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ - تَعَالَى - هُوَ الْخَالِقُ، الْمُدَبِّرُ، وَأَنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يَدْخُلْهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ؛ وَالْدَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ﴾ [يونس: 31].</p>	<p>If you know that the disbelievers who the messenger – peace and salutations of Allāh be upon him – fought affirmed that Allāh – The Exalted – is The Creator The Disposer of Affairs and that did not enter them into Islām, and the scriptural evidence for this is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿Say: “Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?” They will say: "Allāh." Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allāh's Punishment?﴾ (Yūnus [10]: 31).”</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر الأمور): The meaning of the Divine Name Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر الأمور) Is, as Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “meaning, He controls the affairs of the creatures <sup>54</sup>... no affair distracts Him from other affair. No matter troubles Him. The persistent request from His creatures do not

<sup>54</sup>That is, the creation.

annoy Him. He governs big things as He governs small things everywhere, on the mountains, in the oceans, in populated areas or wastelands.”<sup>55</sup>

2. Islām (الإسلام): as a religious term it means: “submission to Allāh with *Tawhīd* and compliance to Him with obedience and absolving oneself from *Shirk* and its people.”<sup>56</sup>
3. The Sustainer (الرزاق): The Sustainer (الرزاق) Is one of the Beautiful and Divine Names of Allāh which denotes: “The one who provides for all of His Servants, there is not a creature on the earth except Allāh provides for it. His providing for His servants is of two types: 1) The general provision which extends to the righteous and the sinner, the first and the last. This is the provision that is required by the body. The specific provision - this being granted to the hearts, nourishing them with knowledge and faith. Also, the lawful provision that has been appointed for the benefit of religion, this being specific to the believers and apportioned in accordance to their differing levels and what His wisdom and mercy dictate.”<sup>57</sup>.
4. The Creator (الخالق): The Creator (الخالق) Is one of the beautiful and Divine Names of Allāh which denotes: “The one who created all that is in existence and originated it, who made everything correct and in its place in accordance to the dictates of His wisdom, who shaped

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<sup>55</sup> Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, (Saudi Arabia, Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2000), vol. 4, p. 560.

<sup>56</sup> That is, the creation.

<sup>57</sup> Abdur-Rahman Nasir as-Sa'dee, nd, *Explanation to the Beautiful and Perfect Names of Allah*. Birmingham: Dar as-Sunnah, p. 154. See also: Sa'id b. 'Alī b. Wahhaf al-Qahtānī, 1409, *Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā fī Dawā' al-Kitāb was-Sunnah*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maṭb'ah Safīr, p. 164 - 156.

everything by virtue of His praise and wisdom. He is continually doing so.”<sup>58</sup>

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks how affirming the oneness of Allāh’s Lordship obligates the affirmation of His worship.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Develop an understanding that acknowledging Allāh as the Creator and Disposer of Affairs did not lead the disbelievers to embrace Islām.
2. Analyse the scriptural evidence from Yūnus [10]: 31, where the disbelievers affirm Allāh's role in providing from the sky and earth, owning hearing and sight, and disposing of the affairs.
3. Understand the significance of the disbelievers' acknowledgment of Allāh's attributes not leading to their acceptance of Islām, as highlighted in the verse.
4. Investigate the implications of the disbelievers' acknowledgment and the subsequent call to fear Allāh's punishment, emphasising the contrast between recognition and true faith.

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<sup>58</sup> *Explanation to the Beautiful and Perfect Names of Allah*, p. 60; *Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā fī Darwā’ al-Kitāb was-Sunnah*, p. 168.

5. Reflect on the gravity of the warning embedded in the verse, urging the disbelievers to fear Allāh's punishment in light of their recognition of His attributes and roles.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. Overview of the First Principle:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) sets out the first principle which is: the polytheists at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed oneness in Allāh's Lordship, or in the Arabic language, *Tawḥīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah*.<sup>59</sup> However, this was not sufficient to enter them into Islām as they made equals and partners with Allāh in respect to His worship. So, negating oneness in His worship or *Tawḥīd-ul-Ibādah*,<sup>60</sup> necessitates the negation of oneness in His Lordship, or *Tawḥīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah*, and vice versa.

2. The Obligation to affirm All Categories of *Tawḥīd*:

- i. Affirming Allāh's Lordship - alone - is not Sufficient:

So, affirming Allāh's Lordship, alone, is not sufficient to enter one into Islām and subsequently into paradise. While the polytheists affirmed that Allāh is The Creator (الخالق), The

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<sup>59</sup> *Tawḥīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah* or Monotheism or oneness in Allāh's Lordship is to single out Allāh, the Exalted, in His actions, in creation, sovereignty, and administrating the affairs..

<sup>60</sup> *Tawḥīd-ul-Ibādah* or Monotheism or oneness in Allāh's worship is to single out Allāh, Glorified and Exalted, in worship, along with complete love, fear, and hope.



Sustainer (الرزاق) and Disposer of the Affairs (المدبّر) they associated partners with Him in His worship: they invoked and supplicated to idols and other deities; ritually sacrificed for them; ascribed powers of creation, deliverance and fortune to them; and organised their lives in accordance to the dictates and religious ordinances delivered by their spiritual mediators. These, from among the many polytheistic beliefs they held and polytheistic acts they committed, nullified their affirmation of Allāh's Lordship.

- ii. The Affirmation of one Category of *Tawḥīd* Obligates affirmation of the other two Categories:

The affirmation of one category of *Tawḥīd* necessitates the affirmation of the other two categories. So, affirmation of Monotheism in Allāh's Lordship or *Tawḥīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah* obligates belief in Monotheism in Allāh's Worship or *Tawḥīd -ul-'Ibādah* and this in turn obligates belief in Monotheism in Allāh's Names and Attributes or *Tawḥīd -ul-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt*.<sup>61</sup>

### 3. Understanding *Sūrah* Yūnus (31):

<sup>61</sup> *Tawḥīd -ul-Asmā' waṣ-Ṣifāt* Monotheism or oneness in Allāh's Names and Attributes is to single out Allāh with what belongs to Him in terms of His Names and Attributes. Or it is: to affirm what Allāh has affirmed for Himself or what His Messenger (ﷺ) affirmed for Him, in terms of names and attributes, without distortion, negation, anthropomorphism, or resemblance. And it is negating what He or His Messenger (ﷺ) negated concerning Himself.

The author (ﷺ) presents verse 31 from *Sūrah Yūnus* as scriptural evidence for this principle.

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah Yūnus* (31):

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“Allāh argues that the idolaters recognition of Allāh’s oneness in Lordship is an evidence against them, for which they should admit and recognise the Oneness in divinity and worship.”<sup>62</sup>

Here, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) affirms the point that they the idolaters - proclaimed belief in Allāh’s Lordship was negated by their committing *Shirk* in His worship.

ii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah Yūnus* (31):

Some of the benefits derived from this noble verse are:

1. Affirmation of Oneness in Allāh’s Lordship: that He is the sole provider and controller of all aspects of the heavens and the earths.
2. Challenges those who associate partners with Allāh by pointing out the inconsistency in affirming the Oneness of Lordship while denying the Oneness in worship.
3. Exemplifies Allah's divine power, such as bringing forth life from the dead and vice versa, which illustrates His

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<sup>62</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 3, p. 600.

control over creation and the miraculous nature of His actions.

4. Demonstrates the comprehensive authority of Allāh over all matters in both the higher and lower worlds, emphasizing His control over every aspect of existence.
5. Calls to monotheism, urging people to fear Allāh and worship Him alone, rejecting any partners or idols.

#### 4. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

1. Many religions and belief systems affirm Allāh's Lordship and that He is The Creator (الخالق), The Sustainer (الرزاق) and The Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر), however, they commit *Shirk* negating one if not both of the other two categories of *Tawhīd*.
2. The polytheists affirmation of monotheism in Allāh's Lordship or *Tawhīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah* did not enter them into Islām as they rejected and denied monotheism in Allāh's Worship *Tawhīd -ul-'Ibādah* by committing *Shirk*.
3. While the polytheists affirmed that Allāh – alone – is The Creator (الخالق), The Sustainer (الرزاق) and The Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر), however, they associated partners with Him in worship and this nullified their affirmation of His Lordship.

4. From among the Divine and Beautiful names of Allāh are: The Creator (الخالق), The Sustainer (الرزاق) and The Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر).
5. The negation or denial of any one of the categories of *Tawḥīd* leads the person to misguidance and possibly to disbelief.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. Define the Divine Name: “Disposer of the Affairs (المدبر الأمور)” and explain its significance according to Ibn Kathīr's interpretation.
2. Provide the Islāmic definition of “Islām.”
3. Explain the concept of “The Sustainer (الرزاق)” and its two types of provision according to the lesson.
4. Define the Divine Name: “The Creator (الخالق)” and describe its significance based on the interpretation found in the lesson
5. Summarise the main points derived from the lesson regarding the affirmation of Allāh's Lordship and its relationship with entering into Islām.

### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *Imām* Ibn Abī al-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī<sup>63</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>63</sup> ‘Alī Ibn Abī al-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī (731 AH - 792 AH = 1331 CE- 1390 CE). He was jurist and the chief judge in Damascus, then in the regions of Egypt, and later returned to Damascus. He faced examination due to his objections.

“The affirmation of the Oneness of Lordship does not require evidence, as it is inherent in human nature. It is closest to what a person contemplates regarding their own matter when they were a sperm. It emerged from between the backbone and the ribs, and the ribs refer to the chest bones. Then that sperm became a well-placed drop in three layers of darkness, cut off from the plans of parents and all other creatures. Even if it were placed on a tablet or a dish, the wise scholars of the world agreed that they could not depict anything from it. It is impossible to conceive the workings of nature in it, as it is a lifeless entity incapable of action and is not characterised by life. No action or planning would emerge from lifelessness.”<sup>64</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. Why is Oneness of Lordship considered natural in human thinking and believed to need no external proof?
2. Explain the stages of human development from sperm to a drop in darkness and how it helps understand Oneness of Lordship.
3. Why is it significant that scholars can't depict anything from the described developmental process, even if placed on a tablet or dish?
4. Discuss the idea that lifelessness in the stages described is incompatible with action and planning in understanding Oneness of Lordship.
5. How does affirming Oneness of Lordship lead to understanding Oneness of Worship? Provide examples from the text.

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<sup>64</sup>*Sharḥ at-Ṭahāwīyah*, pp. 222 – 223.

## X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meaning of the term 'Nearness.'
2. How many categories of 'Nearness' are there?
3. How do idolaters understand 'Nearness.'



## *Lesson 10:*

### *Commentary on the Second Principle: Seeking Nearness to Allah.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Explore why people invoke deities, other than Allāh, focusing on the goal of seeking nearness.
2. Learn to assess and understand the reasons given by individuals who invoke deities other than Allāh.
3. Gain insights into the concept of seeking nearness through invocation and the different intentions people may have.
4. Explore why some seek protection from Allāh and others beside Allāh.

#### **II. Introduction:**

In this lesson, we embark on an exploration of the diverse motives and beliefs surrounding the act of invoking entities other than Allāh. Our primary objectives include delving into the reasons why individuals turn to entities besides Allāh, with a particular emphasis on the common goal of seeking nearness. It is important to critically assess and understand the diverse explanations provided by those who engage in such practices. Furthermore, it is important to gain an insights into the intricate concept

of seeking nearness through invocation. Additionally, it is important to understand some of the main reasons why certain individuals seek nearness and protection from entities beside Allāh.

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ: مَا دَعَوْنَاهُمْ وَتَوَجَّهْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا لَطَلَبِ الْقُرْبَةِ وَالشَّفَاعَةِ، فَدَلِيلُ الْقُرْبَةِ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ [الزمر: 3].</p>	<p>Indeed, they said: we did not invoke them and turn towards them except to seek nearness and intercession, the scriptural evidence of nearness is the statement of The Exalted: ﴿And those who take protectors and helpers besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allāh." Indeed, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allāh guides not him who is a liar, and a disbeliever﴾ (Sūrah az-Zumar [39]: 3).</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Nearness (القربة): Nearness or *al-Qurbah*, in Arabic, is the opposite of farness or distance. Allāh’s nearness to His servants is of two types: firstly, ‘general nearness’ which is His nearness to everyone by His knowledge, and secondly, ‘specific nearness’ which is His closeness to His servants by His love and support.<sup>65</sup>

### V. Lesson Summary:

<sup>65</sup> *Mu’jam Muṣṭalahāt ‘Ulūm-ash-Sharī’ah*, vol. 3, p. 1261



This lesson looks at the Islāmic understanding of nearness to Allāh.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. What is the explicit purpose mentioned by individuals in the statement: "Indeed, they said: we did not invoke them and turn towards them except to seek nearness"?
2. Define the Divine Name associated with the individuals' purpose and explain its significance based on their declaration.
3. Provide an explanation of the concept of seeking nearness as mentioned in the text and its importance in the context of supplication and invocation.
4. How would you define the individuals' acknowledgment regarding their acts of invocation in relation to seeking nearness?
5. Summarise the key points derived from the statement about the individuals' affirmation and its significance in the context of their religious practices.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics:

1. Overview of the Second Principle:

After completing the first principle: that the polytheists at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed monotheism in Allāh's Lordship or *Tawḥīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah* and that Allāh is The Creator, The Sustainer

and the Disposer of the Affairs, however, this was not sufficient to enter them into Islām nor save them from the punishment of the Hellfire, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) moves onto the second principle in which he affirms that the polytheists did not worship their idols believing that they could harm or benefit them, in and of themselves, but also, they worshipped them as intermediaries between themselves and Allāh, seeking nearness to Him and His intercession.

## 2. Seeking Nearness to Allāh:

### i. Overview of the Second Principle:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “Indeed, they said: we did not invoke them and turn towards them except to seek nearness and intercession.” Here, the author introduced the second principle: that the polytheists and idolaters supplicated to and invoked deities – besides Allāh – as a means of seeking nearness to Allāh and as a means of intercession.

### ii. Seeking Nearness to Allāh:

Nearness (القربة): Nearness or *al-Qurbah*, in Arabic, is the opposite of being far or at a distance. Allāh’s nearness to His servants is of two types: firstly, ‘general nearness’ which is His nearness to everyone by His knowledge, supervision, and observation: being omniscient. So, He is close to the person –

in respect to Him being omniscient - than their jugular vein.<sup>66</sup> Secondly, 'specific nearness' which is His closeness to His servants: those who invoke and love Him. This nearness denotes His: love, support, assistance, acceptance, recompense, and assent.<sup>67</sup>

### 3. *Shirk* in Supplication and Invocation (*Du'ā*):

One of the manifestations or categories of *Shirk* is that in supplication or Invocation, in Arabic, *Shirk fī ad-Du'ā*. So, if a person supplicates or invokes others besides Allāh, someone who has no power or ability to achieve what they are being asked for, such as: calling upon the dead; the one who is absent; the living but who are powerless and incapable, such as, jinn, trees, graves, saints, or angels, this would constitute associating partners or equals with Allāh, a major form of polytheism that can expel a person from the fold of Islām, as Allāh has said:

﴿لَوْ مَن يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۖ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

<sup>66</sup> Concerning this, Allāh (ﷻ) states in the Noble Qur'ān: ﴿And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein﴾ (Sūrah Qāf [50]: 16). Commenting on this verse, as-Si' di (رحمته) states: "Which is the closest thing to a person; the jugular veins are the veins on both sides of the neck. This is a reminder to man to remember that His Creator is watching him; He sees what is in his heart and mind and is close to him in all situations. So, he should feel shy, least Allah see him where He forbade him to be, or He not see him where He commanded him to be," *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 9, p. 273.

<sup>67</sup> *Mu'jam Muṣṭalahāt 'Ulūm-ash-Shari'ah*, vol. 3, p. 1261

“And whoever invokes besides Allah another deity for which he has no proof - then his account is only with his Lord. Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed.”

(*Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* [23]: 117)

Polytheists and those who fall into *Shirk* routinely call upon other than Allāh (ﷻ) as intermediaries to intercede on their behalf, either due to their perceived feeling of deficiency or due to their belief that these intermediaries have a supposed higher – spiritual – standing with Allāh (ﷻ). However, Allāh (ﷻ) has commanded us to invoke and supplication to Him directly with no need for intermediaries and supplicating to Him and simultaneously others at the same time is an act of *Shirk* which is rejected,<sup>68</sup> as He has commanded:

﴿وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾

“And your Lord says: "Invoke Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.”

(*Sūrah Ghāfir* [40]: 60)

<sup>68</sup> Allāh (ﷻ) states: ﴿Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible﴾ (*Sūrah Ghāfir* [40]: 60). Commenting on this verse, al-Si‘dī (رحمته) states: “Allah called them to that which is in their best interests in both spiritual and worldly terms., and He instructed them to call upon Him, meaning both the supplication of worship and the supplication of asking for what they need. He promised to respond to them, and He warned them against being too arrogant to do that,” *Tafseer as-Sa’di*, vol. 8, p. 378).

#### 4. Understanding *Sūrah* az-Zumar (3):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the third verse from *Sūrah* az-Zumar as scriptural evidence for the above-mentioned point.

##### i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* az-Zumar (3):

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“Meaning what motivates them to worship them is the fact that they made their idols in the image of the angels – or so they claim – and when they worship those images it is like worshipping the angels, so that they will intercede with Allāh for them to help and give them provision and other worldly needs.”<sup>69</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) illustrates the point, the polytheists took their idols and deities as intercessors with Allāh and were actually worshipping them and so, they fell into *Shirk*.

##### ii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* az-Zumar (3):

Some of the benefits derived from this noble verse are:

1. The verse cautions against the act of taking friends and allies besides Allāh and worshipping them, emphasising the importance of worshipping Allāh alone.

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<sup>69</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 8, p. 357.

2. The verse highlights the false beliefs of those who take allies besides Allāh, claiming that they worship them to get closer to Him.
  3. The verse reinforces the belief in divine judgment, indicating that Allāh will judge between people based on their actions and beliefs.
  4. It conveys a clear message that lying, and disbelief hinder individuals from receiving guidance.
  5. The verse underscores that Allāh does not guide those who are liars and confirmed disbelievers.
5. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

1. *Du'ā* or supplication is an act of worship which is to be performed only to Allāh.
2. To supplicate to other than Allāh or to Allāh and simultaneously to others as partners or equals, for a need or to fend off danger or harm, is an act of *Shirk*.
3. *Du'ā* is of two essential types: Firstly, *Du'ā' ul-Mas'alah* or the Supplication of Asking, which is to supplicate to Allāh for the fulfilment of a need or the removal of harm or danger; and secondly, *Du'ā ul-Ibādah* or the Supplication of Worship which includes all acts of worship.
4. The polytheists in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed *Tawhīd -ur-Rubūbiyyah*, however, this was nullified by their

supplicating to other than Allāh and seeking intercession from other than Him.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. What are the two types of nearness discussed in the lesson and how do they connect to Allāh's relationship with His servants?
2. What reason do those who disbelieve give for calling upon deities other than Allāh?
3. In simple terms, describe the polytheists' belief mentioned in the lesson regarding their idols. Why did they worship them?
4. How does the understanding of seeking nearness impact the way individuals should approach their supplications in Islām?
5. Differentiate between Supplication of Asking or *Du'ā' ul-Mas'alah* and Supplication of Worship or *Du'ā' ul-Ibādah* as mentioned in the lesson. Why is this distinction important in Islamic worship?

### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *Imām* Abdul-Barr <sup>70</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>70</sup> He is Yūsuf ibn Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Barr, Abū 'Umar al-Namari al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī al-Mālikī (368 AH- 463 AH = 978 CE - 1071 CE) (may Allāh have mercy upon him). Among the great scholars of *Ḥadīth*, a historian, a man of letters, and a researcher. He is called 'The Guardian of the Maghreb.' He was born in Cordoba. He embarked on long journeys in the western and eastern parts of Andalusia. He served as a judge in Lisbon and Santarém. He passed away in Shatiba. (*al-Ilām*, vol. 8, p. 240).

“The idol, whether it is a golden or silver statue or any other form of an image, and anything worshipped besides Allāh, is considered an idol, whether tangible or not. The Arabs used to pray to idols and worship them. The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) feared that his nation might follow the practices of previous nations. When prophets among them died, people gathered around their graves as the pagans did around their idols. Therefore, the Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated: “O Allāh, do not make my grave an idol that is worshipped. May no one pray towards it, bow to it, or worship it.”<sup>71</sup> Allāh's anger intensified against those who engaged in such practices. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his companions and the entire Muslim community against emulating the wrongful deeds of previous nations. This included those who prayed at the graves of their prophets, turning them into places of worship, similar to how idolaters treated their idols with reverence. This was a grave act of major polytheism. The Prophet (ﷺ) informed them about the displeasure and anger of Allāh regarding such actions, as it was something that displeased Him and was feared to lead them astray.”<sup>72</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What does the term "idol" encompass in Islāmic teachings, whether tangible or intangible?

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<sup>71</sup> This is a narration reported by Ahmad (12/314) [Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1st edition], from the *Ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) al-Haythamī said, "It includes Ishaq ibn Abī Isrā'īl, and there is discussion about his stance on the Qur'ān, and the rest of its narrators are trustworthy." It is mentioned in Majma' al-Zawā'id (4/2) [Maktabat al-Qudsī], and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Aḥkām al-Janāzah* (217) [Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 4th edition].

<sup>72</sup> *at-Tamhīd*, vol. 5, p. 54



2. Why did the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) express concern about his grave becoming an object of worship?
3. How did the Arabs in the past pray to idols, and what was the Prophet's (ﷺ) stance on such practices?
4. What supplication did the Prophet (ﷺ) make regarding his grave, and what practices did he explicitly forbid?
5. How did the Prophet (ﷺ) warn against emulating the wrongful deeds of previous nations, specifically concerning the treatment of graves?

#### X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. Find the meanings for the term 'Intercession'?
2. How many categories of 'Intercession' are there?
2. How do idolaters understand 'Intercession'?



## *Lesson 11:*

### *Commentary on the Second Principle: Intercession.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Understand the Islāmic understanding of Intercession (*ash-Shifa'āh*).
2. Discover the scriptural evidence for 'Intercession' in the Noble Qur'ān, emphasizing the warning against associating partners with Allāh.
3. Understand the two types of intercession: 'Prohibited Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah*) and 'Affirmed Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Muthbatah*).

#### **I. Introduction:**

Embarking on the exploration of Intercession (*ash-Shifa'āh*) in Islām, it is crucial to gain an in-depth understanding of how Islām understands this concept. The Noble Qur'ān stands as the primary source, offering scriptural evidence that not only clarifies the nature of intercession but also issues a stern warning against associating partners with Allāh. This initial investigation aims to bring clarity to the two distinct categories of intercession: 'Prohibited Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah*) and 'Affirmed Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Muthbatah*). This lesson seeks to unravel the intricate aspects of intercession within the Islāmic framework,

drawing wisdom from the verses of the Qur'ān. So, what is 'Intercession' in Islām? What are its categories? What is the difference between the Islāmic understanding of 'Intercession' and that of the idolaters?

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>وَدَلِيلُ الشَّفَاعَةِ، قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ﴾ [يونس: 18].</p> <p>وَالشَّفَاعَةُ شَفَاعَتَانِ: شَفَاعَةٌ مَنفِيَّةٌ، وَشَفَاعَةٌ مُثَبَّتَةٌ.</p> <p>فَالشَّفَاعَةُ الْمَنفِيَّةُ: مَا كَانَتْ تُطْلَبُ مِنْ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ فِيمَا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ؛ وَالِدَلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةَ وَلَا شَفَاعَةَ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 254].</p> <p>وَالشَّفَاعَةُ الْمُثَبَّتَةُ: هِيَ الَّتِي تُطْلَبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ، وَالشَّافِعُ مُكْرَمٌ بِالشَّفَاعَةِ، وَالْمَشْفُوعُ لَهُ مَنْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ قَوْلُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ بَعْدَ الْإِذْنِ؛ كَمَا قَالَ تَعَالَى: ﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ﴾ [البقرة: 255].</p>	<p>And the scriptural evidence for intercession (<i>ash-Shifa'ah</i>) is the saying of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿And they worship besides Allāh as-Si'dī (الشيء) things that hurt them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allāh." Say: "Do you inform Allāh of that which He knows not in the heavens and on the earth?" Glorified and Exalted be He above all that which they associate as partners with Him!﴾ (Sūrah Yūnus [10]: 18) and intercession (<i>ash-Shifa'aah</i>) is of two types: the 'Prohibited Intercession' (<i>ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah</i>) and the 'Affirmed Intercession' (<i>ash-Shifa'āh Muthbatah</i>) As for the 'Negated Intercession' (<i>ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah</i>): is that which is sought and requested from other than Allāh for that which none, but Allāh has the ability to do, and the scriptural evidence for this is the saying of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿O you who believe! Spend of that with which We have provided for you, before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are the wrong-doers﴾ (Sūrah a-Baqarah [2]: 254).</p> <p>The 'Affirmed Intercession' (<i>ash-Shifa'āh Muthbatah</i>) it is that which is sought and requested from Allāh, and the intercessor is honoured with (being granted the permission of) intercession and the one interceded for (is from those who) Allāh is pleased with his deeds and speech after granting him permission as He The Exalted said: ﴿Who is he that can intercede with Him</p>
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#### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Intercession (شَفَاعَةٌ): Islāmically, it means, ‘the asking of someone or something to mediate on one’s behalf in order to attain a benefit or to fend off danger or harm, whether in worldly matters or in the Hereafter. Similarly, it may be defined as: acting as an intermediary for others to bring about benefits or ward off harm.
2. The ‘Negated Intercession’ (الشَّفَاعَةُ الْمُنْفِيَّةُ): The ‘Negated Intercession’ (*ash-Shifā’ah Manfiyyah*) is that which is sought and requested from other than Allāh for that which none, but Allāh has the ability to achieve.
3. The ‘Affirmed Intercession’ (الشَّفَاعَةُ الْمُثْبِتَةُ): The ‘Affirmed Intercession’ (*ash-Shifā’ah Muthbatah*) is that which is sought and requested from Allāh, and the intercessor is honoured with (being granted the permission of) intercession and the one interceded for (is from those who) Allāh is pleased with his deeds and speech after granting him permission.

#### V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks at the Islāmīc understanding of ‘Intercession.’

#### VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Explore the scriptural evidence from the Noble Qur'ān that discusses intercession (*ash-Shifa'āh*), emphasising the warning against associating partners with Allāh.
2. Understand the two types of intercession: 'Prohibited Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah*) and 'Affirmed Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Muthbatah*).
3. Recognise that the 'Negated Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'āh Manfiyyah*) involves seeking and requesting from deities other than Allāh for matters that only Allāh has the ability to control.
4. Explore scriptural evidence for negated intercession, as mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān: *Sūrah al-Baqarah* [2]: 254.
5. Describe the consequences outlined in the scriptural evidence for seeking intercession from other than Allāh, as found in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* [2]: 254.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics: ā

1. The Second Principle: the Intercession:
  - i. Introduction to the Intercession

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) goes on to look at the issue of '*shif'āh*' or 'intercession' in some detail as this was one of the main reasons how the polytheists at the time

of the Prophet (ﷺ) and those who follow them or resemble them, in respect to worship, fell into *Shirk*.

ii. Categories of Intercession:

The author (رحمہ اللہ) outlines two essential categories of '*shif'āh*' or 'intercession':

1. The 'Affirmed' (*Muthbatah*): which fulfils and meets the conditions of intercession.
2. The 'Negated' (*Manfiyyah*): which does not fulfil and meet the conditions of intercession.<sup>73</sup>

iii. Categories of Intercession: The Affirmed Intercession:

The 'Affirmed Intercession' (*ash-Shif'āh Muthbatah*) has two essential conditions which have been mentioned by the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him): firstly, the permission of Allāh for the interceder to mediate,<sup>74</sup> and secondly, that Allāh is pleased with the one being interceded for<sup>75</sup> and Allāh is not pleased except with the people of *Tawhīd*. Some scholars add two more conditions: the ability of the interceder to intercede<sup>76</sup> and the other one being that the one being interceded for is a believer.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *at-Ta'liq al-Mumti'* 'ala al-Qawā'id al-Arba', p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> The scriptural evidence for this is the saying of Allāh (ﷻ): ﴿Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission?﴾ (Sūrah al-Baqarah [2]: 255).

<sup>75</sup> The scriptural evidence for this is the saying of Allāh (ﷻ): ﴿and they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased﴾ (Sūrah al-Anbiyā' [21]: 28).

<sup>76</sup> The scriptural evidence for this is the saying of Allāh (ﷻ): ﴿And those whom they invoke instead of Him have no power of intercession; except those who bear witness to the truth﴾ (Sūrah az-Zukhruf [43]: 86).

<sup>77</sup> The scriptural evidence for this is the saying of Allāh (ﷻ): ﴿There will be no friend, nor an intercessor for the polytheists and wrong-doers﴾ (Sūrah Ghlāfir [40]: 18).

iv. Categories of Intercession: the ‘Negated’ Intercession:

The negated intercession is intercession that does not meet the conditions of the previous category, the affirmed intercession. As the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said: “is that which is sought and requested from other than Allāh for that which none, but Allāh has the ability to do” Examples of this category of intercession are:

1. Intercession sought from other than Allāh in matters only Allāh can determine.
2. Intercession for disbelievers.
3. Intercession without the permission of the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

2. Understanding *Sūrah* Yūnus (18):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the eighteenth verse from *Sūrah* Yūnus (10) as scriptural evidence for ‘intercession’ or ‘*ash-shif’āh*’.

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* Yūnus (18): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“Allāh reproaches the idolaters that worshipped others besides Allāh, thinking that those gods would intercede for them before Allāh. Allāh states that these gods do not harm nor benefit. They don’t have any authority over

anything, nor do they own anything. These gods can never do what the idolaters had claimed about them.”<sup>78</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) highlights the futility of polytheist who under the pretext of seeking intercessors between themselves and Allāh in actuality where worshipping other than Allāh.

iii. Exegesis of *Sūrah Yūnus* (18): as-Si‘dī:

Similarly, commenting on this verse as-Si‘dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“That is, they worship them so that they may bring them closer to Allāh and intercede for them with Him, but this is something that they fabricated and made up by themselves.”<sup>79</sup>

As-Si‘dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) emphasises the point that the intercession of the polytheists was an utter fabrication as well as an exercise in futility.

iv. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah Yūnus* (18):

Some of the benefits that may be derived from this noble verse are:

1. Allāh reproaches those who worship gods and deities other than Him, especially those who believe these gods and deities can intercede for them.

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<sup>78</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 4, p. 580.

<sup>79</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa’di*, vol. 4, p. 191.



2. Allāh clarifies that the deities worshipped by idolaters have no power to harm nor benefit them, and they lack authority over anything.
3. Allāh dismisses the idolaters' claim that these false gods and deities can intercede, stating that they cannot perform the intercession as asserted by their worshippers.
4. The futility of polytheistic worship, especially the idea of seeking intercession through false gods and deities other than Allāh.
5. The polytheists' belief in intercession is not only futile but also a fabrication, as their false gods and deities cannot bring anyone closer to Allāh much less intercede on their behalf.

### 3. Understanding *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (254):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the two hundredth and fifty-fourth verse from *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (2) as scriptural evidence for the 'Negated Intercession' or *ash-Shifa'aah Manfiyyah*.

#### i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (254): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“meaning, they will not benefit by the intercession of anyone <sup>80</sup>.” Here, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) notes that intercession is the prerogative of Allāh and not that of that any of His creation.

ii. Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (254): as-Si‘dī:

Commenting on this verse, as-Si‘dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“if a person were to offer an earth-full of gold to ransom himself from punishment on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from him, no friend, no status and no intercession will benefit him.” <sup>81</sup>

As-Si‘dī like Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon them both) before him, notes that the intercession is the sole prerogative of Allāh – alone – for which He has no partners nor equals.

iii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (254):

Some of the benefits that may be derived from this noble verse are:

1. Intercession is solely the prerogative of Allāh and is not a privilege granted to any of His creation.
2. The statement "no intercession will benefit him" reinforces the idea that intercession, no matter its

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<sup>80</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 2, p. 20.

<sup>81</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 1, p. 324.

source, holds no value in saving an individual from the consequences of their actions.

3. The verse underscores the notion that each person is individually accountable for their actions, and external factors such as intercession, wealth, friends, or status will not alter the outcome on the Day of Resurrection.
4. The authority for intercession lies exclusively with Allāh, reinforcing the notion that divine mercy and judgment are beyond the control of any created being.
5. The verse implies that on the Day of Resurrection, a person's reliance on intercession from others, regardless of their worldly influence or offerings, is ultimately ineffective, emphasizing the individual's spiritual responsibility for their own deeds.

4. Understanding *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (255):

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the two hundredth and fifty-fifth verse from *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (2) for the 'Affirmed Intercession' or *ash-Shifa'ah Muthbatah*.

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (255): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“These Ayat assert Allāh’s greatness, pride and grace, and that no one dares to intercede with Him on behalf of anyone else, except by His permission.”<sup>82</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) notes that Allāh’s permission is fundamental aspect of the intercession.

ii. Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (255): as-Si‘dī:

Commenting on this verse, as-Si‘dī (رحمہ اللہ) states:

“That is, no one can intercede with Him without His permission. All intercession belongs to Allāh, but when He wants to show mercy to whomever He will among His slave, He gives permission to whomever He wants to honour among His slaves to intercede for him, The intercessor does not initiate intercession before permission is given.”<sup>83</sup>

Again, concurs that the permission of Allāh is a fundamental requirement of intercession.

iii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* al-Baqarah (255):

Some of the benefits that may be derived from this noble verse are:

1. The verse underscores that intercession is solely within Allāh's domain, highlighting His greatness, and grace.

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<sup>82</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 2, p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 1, p. 326.

2. The verse emphasises that no one can intercede without Allāh's permission, reinforcing the idea that divine authority governs the act of intercession.
3. The verse clarifies that all intercession ultimately belongs to Allāh, and no one has the authority to intercede independently without His explicit permission.
4. The verse suggests that Allāh, out of His mercy, allows intercession for those whom He chooses to honour among His slaves, indicating that intercession is a manifestation of divine mercy and grace.
5. Intercessors cannot initiate intercession without prior permission highlights Allah's control over the process.

5. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

1. *Du'ā* or supplication is an act of worship which is to be performed only to Allāh.
1. The polytheists seek intercession with that which can neither benefit, help or harm them.
2. Intercessions is of two types: one that does not meet the conditions and requirements to be accepted by Allāh, *ash-Shifa'aah Manfiyyah* or the 'Negated Intercession' while the other meets the conditions and requirements to be accepted

by Allāh, *ash-Shifa'aah Muthbatah* or the 'Affirmed Intercession'

3. Seeking intercession from Allāh with other than Allāh, or simply from other than Allāh, in that which only He has the ability to achieve, whether this is to alleviate a difficulty, repel evil, or to gain help or assistance then, this is called *ash-Shifa'aah Manfiyyah* or the 'Negated Intercession'
4. Calling upon Allāh – alone - in that which only He has the ability to achieve whether this is to alleviate a difficulty, repel evil, or to gain help or assistance then, this is called *ash-Shifa'aah Muthbatah* or the 'Affirmed Intercession'.
5. None can intercede without Allāh's permission.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. According to the text, what are the two essential conditions for the 'Affirmed Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'ah Muthbatah*)?
2. Provide three examples of intercession that fall under the category of 'Negated Intercession' (*ash-Shifa'ah Manfiyyah*) as mentioned in the text.
3. How does the author use *Sūrah Yūnus* (10:18) as scriptural evidence to discuss intercession, and what benefits are derived from this verse?
4. Explain the significance of divine permission in the context of intercession, as highlighted in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2:255).

5. According to Ibn Kathīr and as-Si‘dī (may Allāh have mercy upon them both), what misconception did the polytheists have regarding intercession, and how does *Sūrah* Yūnus (10:18) address this misconception?

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *Imām* Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

“So, [He] informed that intercession belongs to the one who has sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, and He is Allāh alone. It is He who intercedes by His own will to Himself, showing mercy to His servant. He grants permission to whom He wills to intercede, and thus intercession, in reality, belongs to Him. The one who intercedes does so only with His permission and by His command. After His intercession, glorified is He, to Himself, it is His will to show mercy to His servant. This is contrary to associational intercession.”<sup>84</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What does the term "idol" encompass in Islāmic teachings, whether tangible or intangible?
2. Why did the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) express concern about his grave becoming an object of worship?

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<sup>84</sup> *Ighāthah al-Lafhāh*, vol. 1. p 220.

3. Who alone holds the authority over intercession, as mentioned in the text, and how does this authority manifest in the act of intercession?
4. In simple terms, how does divine permission impact who can intercede and for whom, according to the text?
5. Summarise, in a single sentence, the sequence of events in the process of intercession as outlined in the text and the factors influencing it.
6. According to the text, why does Allāh intercede, and what is the ultimate goal of intercession according to the text?

#### X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. What is the third principle mentioned by the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him)?
2. Why did the polytheists worship the righteous? Why?
2. Did the Prophet (ﷺ) treat polytheists differently according to what they worshipped?





## *Lesson 12:*

### *Commentary on the Third Principle.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Learn about the various ways people practiced *shirk* during the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
2. Understand the Qur'ānic verses that address polytheistic worship, including angels, prophets, righteous individuals, and celestial bodies.
3. Comprehend the Qur'ānic verses emphasising the prohibition of worshipping anything besides Allāh, specifically rejecting the worship of the sun, moon, angels, prophets, and the righteous.

#### **I. Introduction:**

In exploring the Islāmic teachings on monotheism, it is important to develop an understanding of polytheistic beliefs and ,practices particularly those practiced during the time of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). This lesson involves not only recognising the various manifestations of polytheism or *Shirk* but also comprehending the Qur'ānic verses that address these practices. The Noble Qur'ān and the authentic *Sunnah* provide explicit guidance on polytheistic worship, such as, cautioning against attributing divine qualities to angels, prophets, righteous individuals, and even celestial

bodies. Moreover, a crucial aspect of this study involves a profound comprehension of the Qur'ānic verses that strongly emphasise the prohibition of worshipping anything or anyone besides Allāh. This prohibition extends to rejecting the worship of the sun, moon, angels, prophets, and the righteous, clarifying that unequivocal monotheistic stance advocated in the religion of Islām. So, what were some of the objects the polytheists and idol worshippers took as objects of worship? Why didn't the Prophet distinguish between these polytheists and idol worshippers?

### III. The Text:

*Imām Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- ظَهَرَ عَلَى أَنَاسٍ مُتَفَرِّقِينَ فِي عِبَادَاتِهِمْ، مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ الْأَشْجَارَ وَالْأَحْجَارَ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ، وَقَاتَلَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- وَلَمْ يَفَرِّقْ بَيْنَهُمْ؛ وَالذَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ﴾ [الأنفال: 39]. وَذَلِيلُ الشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ [فصلت: 37]. وَذَلِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا...﴾ [آل عمران: 80]. وَذَلِيلُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمَ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ﴾ [المائدة: 116].

Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) appeared among a people who differed in what they worshipped: from them were those who worshipped angels; from them were those who worshipped the prophets and the righteous; from them were those who worshipped trees and stones; from them were those who worshipped the sun and the moon, and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) fought them not distinguishing between them, and the scriptural evidence (for this) is the saying of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿And fight them until there is no more persecution and all worship will all be for Allāh Alone﴾ (Sūrah Anfāl [8]: 39).

The scriptural evidence for (their worshipping) the sun and the moon is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate to Allāh Who created them, if you (really) worship Him﴾ (Sūrah Fuṣṣilat [41]: 37).

وَدَلِيلُ الصَّالِحِينَ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَى رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ...﴾ الآية [الإسراء: 57]. وَدَلِيلُ الْأَشْجَارِ وَالْأَحْجَارِ؛ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ \* وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ﴾ [النجم: 91، 20].

وَحَدِيثُ أَبِي وَقْدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ -رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ- قَالَ: خَرَجْنَا مَعَ النَّبِيِّ -صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ- إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ وَنَحْنُ حَدَثَاءُ عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ، وَلِلْمُشْرِكِينَ سِدْرَةٌ، يَعْكُفُونَ عِنْدَهَا وَيَنْوِطُونَ بِهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ، يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ، فَمَرَرْنَا بِسِدْرَةٍ فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا هُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. الْحَدِيثُ.

The scriptural evidence for (their worshipping) the angels is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿Nor would he order you to take angels and Prophets for lords (gods)﴾ (Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān [3]: 80).

The scriptural evidence for (their worshipping) the prophets is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿And remember when Allāh will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say unto men: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allāh?' " He will say: "Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours, truly, You, only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden and unseen﴾ (Sūrah Mā'idah [5]: 116).

The scriptural evidence for (their worshipping) the righteous is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿Those whom they call desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord (Allāh), as to which of them should be the nearest and they hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment﴾ (Sūrah al-Isrā' [17]: 57).

The scriptural evidence for (their worshipping) trees and stones is the statement of Allāh The Exalted: ﴿Have you then considered *al-Lāt*, and *al-Uzza*. And *Manāt*, the third - the other one?﴾ (Sūrah an-Najam [53]: 19 - 20).

And the Prophetic tradition (Ḥādīth): Abū Wāqid al-Laythī (رضي الله عنه) said: "We departed with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to Ḥunayn while we had just recently reverted to Islām and had left polytheism. The polytheists had a Lote tree which they used to reverently frequent and hang their swords upon. They called it *Dhāt al-Anwāt*. Afterward, we passed by (another similar) Lote tree, so we said: 'O Messenger of Allāh, construct for us a *Dhāt al-Anwāt* just like their *Dhāt al-Anwāt*.'

#### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. al-Lāt (اللات): Linguistically, the name Lāt was derived from the term al-Ilāh, which means that which deserves to be worshipped.<sup>85</sup> Lāt was an idol worshipped by the polytheists, based upon a man who was renowned for his service to pilgrims. Upon his death the people marked his grave as a place of respect of his memory and with time it eventually becoming a place of worship.<sup>86</sup> Lāt was an idol worshipped by the people of Thaḳīf.<sup>87</sup>
2. al-'Uzza (العُزَّى): Linguistically, 'Uzza is a feminine name derived from a distortion of the Divine name al-'Azīz, meaning, The Mighty.<sup>88</sup> 'Uzza was an idol made of white stone which the polytheists took as an object of worship.<sup>89</sup> 'Uzza was largely worshipped by the tribes of Quraysh and Kinānah.<sup>90</sup>
3. Manāt (مناة): Linguistically, Manāt is derived from the word Manān which means bestower of blessings.<sup>91</sup> Manāt was an idol that was worshipped by the tribes of Hudhayl and Khaz'ah.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 9, p. 334.

<sup>86</sup> See: Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al 'Uthaymīn, 1415, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd 'alā al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Āṣimah, vol. 1, p. 198.

<sup>87</sup> Abdur-Raḥmān b. Ḥassan b. Muhammad b, Abdul-Wahhāb. *Fath-ul-Majīd Sharḥ al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*. Dār al-Āṣimah, p. 229.

<sup>88</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 9, p. 334.

<sup>89</sup> *Fath-ul-Majīd Sharḥ al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, p. 230.

<sup>90</sup> *Fath-ul-Majīd Sharḥ al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, p. 229.

<sup>91</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 9, p. 334; *al-Qawl al-Mufīd 'alā al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, vol. 1, p. 198.

<sup>92</sup> *Fath-ul-Majīd Sharḥ al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, p. 229.

4. Ḥunayn (حُنَيْن): The Ḥunayn valley lies ten miles east of Makkah on route to Ta'if. It was the site of a battle between the Muslims and the polytheist tribe of Hawāzin.<sup>93</sup>
5. *Dhāt al-Anwāt* (ذَاتُ أَنْوَاط): A Lote tree taken as a place of reverence and adulation which the polytheists and idolators at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) would suspend their weapons, sacrifice animals and spend time in devotion under it, seeking its supposed blessings.<sup>94</sup> The given-name '*Dhāt al-Anwāt*' refers to the polytheists suspending their swords upon the tree after battle, by doing this they believed that they would receive blessings from it.<sup>95</sup>

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks at how the Prophet (ﷺ) appeared among a people who differed in their worship, yet he (ﷺ) did not differentiate between them.

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Describe the diverse forms of polytheistic practices prevalent during the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), including the worship of angels, prophets, the righteous, trees, stones, the sun, and the moon.

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<sup>93</sup> Salih al-Fawzan, 2005, *Concise Commentary on the Book of Tawḥid*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: al-Maiman Publishing House, p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> See: Ṣafī ar-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfurī, nd, *ar-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm*. Dār Iḥyā' at-Turāth, p. 382; *al-Qaṣṣ al-Mufīd 'alā al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, vol. 1, p. 202.

<sup>95</sup> *al-Qaṣṣ al-Mufīd 'alā al-Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Āṣimah, vol. 1, p. 202; *Concise Commentary on the Book of Tawḥid*, p. 88.

2. Explore the scriptural evidence from the Noble Qur'an that addresses the polytheistic worship of various entities, as highlighted in verses such as: *Sūrah Anfāl* [8]: 39, *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* [41]: 37, *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* [3]: 80, *Sūrah Mā'idah* [5]: 116, *Sūrah al-Isrā'* [17]: 57, and *Sūrah an-Najam* [53]: 19-20.
3. Understand the Qur'anic verses emphasising the prohibition of worshipping anything besides Allāh, as specifically mentioned in relation to the sun, moon, angels, prophets, the righteous, trees, and stones.
4. Recognise the uniform approach of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in opposing different forms of polytheism, as evidenced by the statement of Allāh in *Sūrah Anfāl* [8]: 39.
5. Understand the *Ḥādīth* or Prophetic tradition narrated by the illustrious Companion Abū Wāqid al-Laythī (may Allāh be pleased with him), illustrating the early Muslims' request to replicate a polytheistic practice and the Prophet's (ﷺ) response, highlighting the need to avoid such practices.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics: ā

1. Overview of the Third Principle:

Here, The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the third principle, which is: That the Prophet (ﷺ) appeared among a people who differed in what they worshipped, despite this, he did

not distinguish between them considering them all to be polytheists, nor did this stop him from confronting them.

An important point is that despite the objects they worshipped being respected, such as angels, or holding a high status, such as the Prophets or the righteous, this did not change the fact that this is an act of *Shirk* which neither Allah or those worshipped were pleased with. So, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not distinguish between the polytheists and considered them all to be the same despite differing in what they worshipped and how they worshipped. Their differences did not stop him from opposing and confronting them.

## 2. Understanding *Sūrah* al-Anfāl 39):

Concerning this point the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the thirty-ninth verse from *Sūrah* al-Anfāl (8) as scriptural evidence for this point:

﴿رَضِيَ وَقَتْلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾ (39)

And fight them until there is no more persecution and all worship will all be for Allāh Alone.

(*Sūrah* Anfāl [8]: 39)

Looking at the books of exegesis will give us a greater understanding of this verse.

i. Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Anfāl 39): as-Si'dī:

Commenting on this verse, as-Si'dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“This is the goal of fighting and jihad against the enemies of the faith; it is to ward off their evil from the faith and to defend the religion of Allāh, Who created people to follow this path.”

iii. Benefits Derived from *Sūrah* al-Anfāl 39):

Some of the benefits that may be derived from this noble verse are:

1. The verse advocates confronting those who engage in persecution, referring to associating partners with Allāh and obstructing the path of Islām.
2. The primary aim is to ensure that the entire religion is dedicated solely to Allāh, emphasizing the uniqueness and the inherent ascendancy of Islām.
3. There is a clear rejection of oppression, those who commit wrongdoing. The greatest be polytheism, and persecution, aligning with Islāmic principles of justice.
4. The struggle aims to establish the supremacy of Islām over other religions, particularly opposing polytheistic beliefs, emphasising monotheism and rejecting associating partners with Allāh.



5. The verse underscores that Allāh is All-Seeing, and nothing is hidden from Him, highlighting divine awareness.

3. Objects and Deities Worshipped by the Idolators and Polytheists:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) then goes on to give an extensive list of a number of the objects, by means of example and by no means a definitive nor an exhaustive list, of objects the polytheists and idolators in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) took as objects of worship besides Allāh. From them were those who worshipped angels; those who worshipped the prophets and the righteous; those who worshipped trees and stones; and those who worshipped the sun and the moon.

i. The Sun and the Moon:

From the objects that the polytheists and idolators at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) worshipped were the sun and the moon. Concerning this, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the thirty-seventh verse from *Sūrah* Fuṣṣilat (41) as scriptural evidence of this:

﴿وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ (٣٧)

And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun nor to the moon,

but prostrate to Allāh Who created them, if you (really) worship Him.

(*Sūrah Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* [41]: 37)

a) Exegesis of *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat* (37): as-Si'dī:

Commenting on this verse, as-Si'dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“for they are created things, under control and subjugated.”<sup>96</sup>

Here, as-Si'dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) affirms that what they – the polytheists – worshipped were in reality a creation just like themselves and did not have the right to be worshipped nor could they provide any benefits nor safeguard from harm.

ii. The Angels:

In respect to the polytheists and idolators worshipping the angels, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the eightieth verse from *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* (3) as scriptural evidence of this:

﴿وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا﴾

Nor would he order you to take angels and Prophets for lords (gods).

<sup>96</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 8, p. 421.

a) Exegesis of *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* (80): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states: “The Prophet does not command worshipping other than Allāh, whether a sent Messenger or an angel.”<sup>97</sup>

b) Exegesis of *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān* (80): as-Si’dī:

Similarly, commenting on this verse, as-Si’dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“he would not instruct you to worship him or to worship any of creation such as angels, prophets or others.”<sup>98</sup>

Both Ibn Kathīr and as-Si’dī (may Allāh have mercy upon them both) in their commentaries point to the futility of worshipping the angels as they are from the creation of Allāh and thus, do not deserve to be worshipped as none has the right to be worshipped but He.

iii. The Prophets:

As for the polytheists and idolators worshipping the prophets, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the one

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<sup>97</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 2, p. 198.

<sup>98</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa’di*, vol. 1, p. 441.

hundredth and sixteenth verse from *Sūrah al- Mā'idah* (5) as scriptural evidence of this:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَعْيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالِ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ ، فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ﴾

And remember when Allāh will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say unto men: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allāh?' " He will say: "Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours, truly, You, only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden and unseen﴿

(*Sūrah Mā'idah* [5]: 116)

a) Exegesis of *Sūrah al- Mā'idah* (116): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“the crime of the Christians who invented a lie against Allāh and His Messenger, thus making a rival, wife and son for Allāh. Allāh is glorified I

that He is far above what they attribute to Him.”<sup>99</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) points to the Christians worshipping Prophet ‘Īsā or Jesus (peace be upon him) in the English language, who was a Prophet sent by Allāh to convey His message and, thus did not have the right to be worshipped.

b) Exegesis of *Sūrah* al- Mā’idah (116): as-Si’dī:

As-Si’dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states, when commenting on this verse:

“No created being, neither the angels who are close to Allāh nor the prophets who were sent nor anyone else, has the right or is qualified to be regarded as divine. Rather they are all slaves under control, and poor creatures who are subjugated, dependent and helpless.”<sup>100</sup>

As-Si’dī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) affirms the prohibition of worshipping created beings, whether they were prophets or not as only He – Allāh - has the right to be worshipped.

iv. The Righteous:

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<sup>99</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 3, pp. 306 -307.

<sup>100</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa’di*, vol. 3, pp. 54 - 55.

As for the polytheists worshipping the righteous, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the fifty-seventh verse from *Sūrah al-Isrā'* (17) as scriptural evidence of this:

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾﴾

Those whom they invoke seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.

(*Sūrah al-Isrā* [17]: 57)

a) Exegesis of *Sūrah al-Isrā'* (57): Ibn Kathīr:

Concerning this verse, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) reports from al-‘Awfi that Ibn Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The people of Shirk used to say, ‘we worship the angels and the Messiah and ‘Uzayr,’ while these (the angels and the Messiah and ‘Uzayr) themselves call upon Allāh.”<sup>101</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) notes that the polytheists worship the angels and the prophets who are absolved of this as they worship Allāh and have never condoned such a practice.

<sup>101</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 6, p. 37.

b) Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-Isrā' (57): as-Si'di:

As-Si'di (رحمته) states in his commentary on this verse:

“﴿Those upon whom they call﴾ among the Prophets, the righteous and the angels ﴿themselves seek nearness to their Lord, [competing to see] which of them will be nearest﴾ that is, they compete in drawing near to their Lord, striving their utmost to do righteous deeds that will bring them closer to Allāh and to His mercy, for they fear His punishment, so they avoid everything that may lead to it.”<sup>102</sup>

As-Si'di (رحمته) highlights the practice of the angels and the prophets to worship Allāh – alone – in contradiction to the polytheists, who falsely call to their worship.

v. Trees and Stones:

In regard to the polytheists worshipping trees and stones, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents a verse from the Noble Qur'ān and a *Ḥādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ).

As for the verse from the Qur'ān, then the author presents verses nineteen to twenty from *Sūrah* an-Najam (53) as evidence of this:

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<sup>102</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa'di*, vol. 5, p. 298.

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ (١٩) وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ﴾ (٢٠)

So, have you considered al-Lat and al-'Uzza? And Manat, the third - the other one?

(*Sūrah* an-Najam [53]: 19 – 20)

a) Exegesis of *Sūrah* an-Najam (19 - 20): Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on these verses, Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) states:

“Allāh the Exalted rebukes the idolaters for worshipping idols and taking rivals to Him. They built houses for their idols to resemble the Ka’bah built by Prophet Ibrahim.”<sup>103</sup>

Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon him) highlights the practice of the polytheists to build structures in reverence of their idols in a futile attempt to elevate their status and to rival the sacred mosque in Makkah.

c) *Ḥādīth* Abū Wāqid al-Laythī:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the *Ḥādīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) as scriptural evidence for the polytheists worshipping trees and stones, which was

<sup>103</sup> *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (Abridged)*, vol. 9, p. 319.



narrated by Abū Wāqid al-Laythī (may Allāh be pleased with him) in which he said:

“We departed with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) to Ḥunayn while we had just recently reverted to Islām and had left polytheism. The polytheists had a Lote tree which they used to reverently frequent and hang their swords upon. They called it *Dhāt al-Anwāt*. Afterward, we passed by (another similar) Lote tree, so we said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), construct for us a *Dhāt al-Anwāt* for us just like their *Dhāt al-Anwāt*.”

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i) Sources of the *Ḥādīth*:

This *Ḥādīth* was collected by Ahmad<sup>105</sup> and at-Tirmithī<sup>106</sup> and declared *Ṣaḥīḥ*, an authentic narration, by at-Tirmithī<sup>107</sup> and al-Albānī.<sup>108</sup>

ii) Narrator of the *Ḥādīth*:

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<sup>104</sup> According to the narration of at-Tirmithī the *Ḥādīth* continues and concludes: “So, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Exalted is Allāh of that which is falsely ascribed to Him! This is just like what the people of Mūsā (Moses) said: ‘**Make for us a deity just like their deity** (*Sūrah al-‘Arāf* [7]: 138).’ By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! You shall follow the way of those who came before you.”

<sup>105</sup> Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, 1421/2000, *Musnad al-Imām Ahmad b. Ḥanbal*. Beirut, Lebanon: Mu’assisah ar-Risālah, vol. 36, pp. 225 – 226, no. 21897.

<sup>106</sup> Muhammad Nāṣir-ad-Dīn al-Albānī, 1420/2000, *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmithī li-Imām al-Ḥafīẓ Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. Suwrah at-Tirmithī*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabah Ma’ārif, vol. 2, p. 463, no. 2180.

<sup>107</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmithī li-Imām al-Ḥafīẓ Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. Suwrah at-Tirmithī*, vol. 2, p. 463, no. 2180.

<sup>108</sup> Muhammad Nāṣir-ad-Dīn al-Albānī, 1400/1980, *Kitāb as-Sunnah li-Ḥafīẓ Abī Bakar ‘Umarū b. Abī ‘Āṣim ad-Dīḥḥak Mukhallid ash-Shaybānī*. Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, p. 37, no. 76.

As for the narrator of this *Hādīth*, then he is the noble *Ṣaḥābī* or Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) Abū Wāqid al-Ḥārith b. 'Awf from the tribe of Layth thus, the epithet al-Laythī at the end of his name (may Allāh be pleased with him). It is said that he fought in the battles of Badr and Yarmouk. He passed away in Makkah 67 AH.<sup>109</sup>

iii) Commentary of the *Hādīth*:

Commenting on this *Hādīth*, shaykh Sālih Fawzān al- Fawzān states:

“Abu Waqid gives an account of an interesting incident that took place immediately before the Battle of Hunayn, Some Muslims had just embraced Islam, and thus were unaware of specific acts of polytheism. When they witnessed the polytheists seeking the blessings of a tree, they asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to assign a tree for them to seek blessings thereof. The Prophet (ﷺ) was greatly surprised and shocked by their suggestion. He disapproved of their mistaken proposal and likened it to the affair of Children of

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<sup>109</sup> ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Jizrī b. al-Athīr, 1433/2012, *Asad-ul-Ghābah fī Mā'rifah aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Ibn Ḥazam, p. 1414.

Israel who asked Moses to assign an idol for them to worship.” <sup>110</sup>

4. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

- 1, Despite variations in what they worshipped, including respected entities like angels and esteemed figures like prophets and the righteous, the Prophet treated all as polytheists.
- 2, Worshipping revered objects did not negate the act of Shirk, emphasizing that only Allāh deserves worship.
2. Verse 39 *Sūrah* al-Anfāl encourages opposing and confronting those committing wrongdoing, particularly polytheism.
3. The author provides examples of objects worshipped by polytheists, such as angels, prophets, trees, stones, and celestial bodies.
4. The *Ḥādīth* Abū Wāqid al-Laythī (may Allāh be pleased with him) underscores the Prophet's commitment to eliminating remnants of polytheistic practices among new converts.
5. *Sūrah* al-Anfāl (39) encourages confrontation against wrongdoing, emphasising the uniqueness and ascendancy of Islām.

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<sup>110</sup> *Concise Commentary on the Book of Tawhīd*, p. 88.

## VIII. Assessment:

1. What is the third principle discussed in the text, and why is it emphasised that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not distinguish between polytheists based on their varied objects of worship?
2. According to the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him), what does Sūrah al-Anfāl (8): 39 emphasise regarding the confrontation of polytheists and polytheism?
3. Provide examples of various objects and deities that the polytheists in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) worshipped, as mentioned in the text.
4. What evidence does the text present to illustrate that polytheists worshipped prophets, and how do Ibn Kathīr and as-Si'dī (may Allāh have mercy upon them both) comment on this phenomenon?
5. Describe the incident narrated by Abū Wāqid al-Laythī (may Allāh be pleased with him) regarding the polytheists and their reverence for a tree. How did the Prophet (ﷺ) respond to the request of Muslims to have a similar tree?

## XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar Abū Wafā' bin 'Aqīl al-Baghdādī<sup>111</sup> (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

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<sup>111</sup> He is 'Alī ibn 'Aqīl ibn Muhammad ibn 'Aqīl al-Baghdādī az-Zafarī (431 AH- 513 AH = 1040 CE - 1119 CE), known as Ibn Aqīl, was a scholar from Iraq and a prominent figure among the Ḥanbalīs in Baghdad during his time. He was distinguished

“When the obligations became burdensome for the ignorant and the dense, they deviated from the rightful positions of Islāmic law to glorify situations they established for themselves. They facilitated matters for themselves by not subjecting these situations to the authority of others. In my view, they are disbelievers due to these conditions. Examples include venerating graves and honouring them, contrary to what Islāmic law prohibits, such as lighting fires near them, kissing them, circumambulating them, addressing the deceased with tablets and written messages like, 'O my master, do such and such for me,' taking soil from them for blessings, spreading fragrance on the graves, setting out on journeys to them, and hanging pieces of cloth on trees in imitation of those who worshipped al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā.”<sup>112</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. How does the text describe the actions of those whom the author considers as deviating from Islāmic law, especially regarding the treatment of graves?
2. According to the author, why does he consider those who engage in practices like venerating graves, lighting fires near them, and addressing the deceased with written messages as disbelievers?

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in argumentation (evidence), initially adhering to the Mu'tazilite school of thought. He held great respect for al-Hallaj, but, he publicly repented and began producing works, among them the most significant.

<sup>112</sup> *Talbis Iblis*, p. 387.

3. In the context of the text, what is the significance of not subjecting these situations to the authority of others, and how does it contribute to the author's evaluation of the individuals in question?

#### X. Preparation for the Next Lesson:

Read the upcoming text of the next lesson, and extract from it the following:

1. what is the third principle mentioned by the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him)?
2. How many categories of 'Intercession' are there?
2. How do idolaters understand 'Intercession'?



## *Lesson 13:*

### *Commentary on the Fourth Principle.*

#### **I. Lesson Objectives:**

1. Develop a greater understanding of the manifestation of Polytheism or *Shirk*.
2. Explore the Qurānic verse *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29) 65, that illustrates how polytheists behaved differently in various situations.
3. Compare how earlier polytheists turned sincerely to Allāh in hard times, while modern polytheists persist in *Shirk* whether in times of hardship or ease.

#### **I. Introduction:**

In this lesson, we delve further into the Islāmic understanding of Polytheism or *Shirk*, seeking a comprehensive understanding of its manifestation. Our journey takes us to the Qur’ānic verse found in *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65, where the behaviour of polytheists is unveiled in diverse circumstances. We embark on a comparative analysis, distinguishing between the earlier polytheists who, in times of adversity, turned sincerely to Allāh, and their modern counterparts who persist in *Shirk* irrespective of the challenges they face or ease they encounter. Through this examination, we aim to unravel the complexities surrounding

polytheism or *Shirk*, drawing insights from historical perspectives and contemporary practices. So, how did the polytheists behave in times of hardship? How did they behave in times of ease? How does the behaviour of the polytheists of old differ with those today?

### III. The Text:

*Imām* Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb ibn Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) said:

<p>أَنَّ مُشْرِكِي زَمَانِنَا أَغْلَظُ شِرْكًَا مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ، لِأَنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ يُشْرِكُونَ فِي الرِّخَاءِ، وَيُخْلِصُونَ فِي الشَّدَّةِ، وَمُشْرِكُو زَمَانِنَا شِرْكُهُمْ دَائِمٌ فِي الرِّخَاءِ وَالشَّدَّةِ؛ وَالِدَّلِيلُ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِّكَ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ﴾ [العنكبوت: 65].</p> <p>وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ. وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.</p>	<p>That the polytheists in our times are more severe in their <i>Shirk</i> than the earlier ones, because the earlier ones would commit <i>Shirk</i> in times of ease and would be sincere (to Allāh) in times of difficulty, and the polytheists in our times they commit <i>Shirk</i> perpetually, in times of ease or hardship. And the scriptural evidence for this is the saying of The Exalted: ﴿ And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allāh, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him ﴾ (<i>Sūrah</i> al-‘Ankabūt [29]: 65).</p> <p>And Allāh knows best, and peace and salutations be upon Muhammad, and upon his family and Companion.</p>
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### IV. Important Vocabulary:

1. Hardship (الشَّدَّة): These are times in which there is relative or absolute difficulty or suffering.
2. Ease (الرِّخَاء): These are times in which there is relative or absolute comfort or ease.



3. Sincerely (مخلصا): The person purifying their intention and volition by making their deeds and statements solely for the sake of Allāh.<sup>113</sup>
4. Sending Peace and Salutations upon the Prophet (ﷺ): Sending peace upon the Prophet (ﷺ) is to supplicate to Allāh that he is safe and protected from harm or misfortune, in this life and the next.<sup>114</sup> As for the sending of salutations upon the Prophet (ﷺ) then this is to supplicate to Allāh requesting that He bestows his mercy and blessings upon the Prophet (ﷺ) and for him to be praised by the angels and those in the heavens.<sup>115</sup>
5. Family of the Prophet (ﷺ): Islāmically, the term Family of the Prophet (ﷺ) or his Āl, in the Arabic language, refers to the relatives of the Prophet (ﷺ) for whom *Ṣadaqah* or supererogatory charity is prohibited, this includes, his wives and his progeny.<sup>116</sup>
6. The Companions (الصَّحَابَةُ): Linguistically, the term *Ṣaḥābah* is the plural form of the noun *ṣaḥābī* which means companion or an acquaintance.<sup>117</sup> Islāmically, it refers to someone who saw or met the Prophet (ﷺ), believing in him and died upon Islām or anyone who met the Prophet (ﷺ) believing in him and died upon that belief, even if they did not see him. The lack of seeing could be due to a hindrance

<sup>113</sup> Mu'jam Muṣṭalahāt 'Ulūm-ash-Sharī'ah, vol.1, p. 92.

<sup>114</sup> Muhammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al 'Uthaymīn, 1422, *ash-Sharḥ al-Mumtī' 'alā Zād al-Mustaqni'*. Dammām, Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 3. pp. 149 - 150.

<sup>115</sup> *ash-Sharḥ al-Mumtī' 'alā Zād al-Mustaqni'*, vol. 3. pp. 163 - 164.

<sup>116</sup> See: Sulaymān as-Suḥaymī, 1420/2000, *al-Aqīdah Abl-ul-Bayt bayn al-Ifrāt wa at-Tafrīt*. Ismā'īliyyah, Egypt: Maktabah Imām Bukhārī, pp. 51 – 56.

<sup>117</sup> See: Ahmad b. 'Alī ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, 1410/1995, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyyiz aṣ-Ṣaḥābah*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ālamiyyah, vol. 1, p. 7.

like blindness, as is the case with some companions like Ibn Umm Maktūm and others. Even if the companionship was brief.

## V. Lesson Summary:

This lesson looks at how the polytheists and idolaters in our times are greater and more severe in their committing *Shirk* than those in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

## VI. What is Derived from the Text:

1. Understand the seriousness of *Shirk* among modern polytheists, which is even more severe than that of the past.
2. Explore how earlier polytheists behaved differently, committing *Shirk* in times of ease but sincerely turning to Allah in hard times.
3. Recognise that today's polytheists continuously commit *Shirk*, whether times are tough or easy.

## VII. Focus of the Lesson:

This lesson includes the following topics: ā

1. Overview of the Fourth Principle:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the fourth principle, and the final principle of this treatise, which is: that the

polytheists in his times and by extension our times are more severe in their *Shirk* than the earlier generations, because the earlier generations would commit polytheism or *Shirk* in times of ease and would be sincere in their worship of Allāh in times of difficulty while the polytheists in our times commit polytheism or *Shirk* perpetually, in times of ease and in times of hardship.

## 2. Understanding *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65:

In regards to the polytheists of our times being more severe in their committing of shirk, being perpetual in their associating partners or equals with Allāh in His (ﷻ) worship or that which is unique to Him in respect to His Lordship or His Divine Names and Lofty attributes, the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) presents the sixty-fifth of *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29) as scriptural evidence of this:

﴿ فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾ ٦٥

And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allāh, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him.

(*Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt [29]:65)

### a) Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65: Ibn Kathīr:

Commenting on these verses, Ibn Kathīr (رحمته الله) reports:

“Muhammad bin Ishaq reported from `Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl that when the Messenger of Allāh conquered Makkah, he (`Ikrimah) ran away, fleeing from him. When he was on the sea, headed for Ethiopia, the ship started to rock and the crew said: "O people, pray sincerely to your Lord alone, for no one can save us from this except Him." `Ikrimah said: "By Allāh, if there is none who can save us on the sea except Him, then there is none who can save us on land except Him either, O Allah, I vow to You that if I come out of this, I will go and put my hand in the hand of Muhammad and I will find him kind and merciful." And this is what indeed did happen.”<sup>118</sup>

**In this report,** Ibn Kathīr (رحمہ اللہ) illustrates the practice of the polytheists to become sincere in worship in times of difficulty or danger and how Ikrimah (may Allāh have mercy upon him) recognised the futility of polytheism as the one – Allāh (may Allāh have mercy upon him) - who kept them safe on land, when they were in a state of ease and comfort, was the same deity that had the sole right to be worshipped at sea, when they were in a state of danger and faced harm.

b) Exegesis of *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65: as-Si’dī:

Similarly, in his commentary on this verse as-Si’dī (رحمہ اللہ) states:

<sup>118</sup> *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 7, p. 513.

“Then Allah (ﷻ) proves the polytheists to be wrong on the basis that they show sincerity to Allāh (ﷻ) alone at times of distress when travelling by sea, when they are tossed about by the waves and fear death. At that time they forsake the rivals and call sincerely upon Allah alone, with no partner or associate. But when the hardship is over and the One on Whom they called sincerely has delivered them safely to the shore, they associate with Him those who could not save them or grant them relief at the time of difficulty. Why do they not show sincerity to Allāh at times of both ease and hardship, so that they might truly be believers in Him, deserving of His reward and warding off His punishment?”<sup>119</sup>

As-Si‘dī like Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy upon them both) before him, illustrates the practice of the idolaters of turning to Allāh in times of danger and hardship and returning to polytheism in times of comfort and ease. He not only highlighted the futility of this practice but that it is irrational as Allāh deserves to be worshipped in both times of ease and comfort as well as in times of hardship and danger.

c) Benefits from *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65:

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<sup>119</sup> *Tafseer as-Sa‘dī*, vol. 7, pp. 287 - 288.

1. Polytheists acknowledge Allāh's ultimate power during sea dangers, genuinely turning to Him in distress and understanding His exclusive ability to save.
2. The polytheists truly recognise the inefficacy and ultimate futility of associating partners with Allāh.
3. The sincerity of polytheists' supplication during hardships, showing that they instinctively acknowledge the truth of the oneness of Allāh.
4. The inconsistency in polytheists' beliefs as they abandon their associated deities once the danger at sea subsides, raising questions about the credibility of polytheistic practices.
5. The exclusive role of Allāh in saving individuals during crises, emphasising that turning to Him alone in times of peril reflects a genuine understanding of monotheism.

### 3. The Polytheists of Our Times:

While the polytheists of earlier times had the propensity to worship Allāh in times of hardship while committing polytheism or *Shirk* in times of ease, The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) notes that the polytheists in his time, and by extension those in our time as well, and beyond are more severe in their committing of

polytheism or *Shirk* doing so perpetually in times of hardship as well as ease, relentlessly committing *Shirk*.

4. Conclusion of the Treatise:

The author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) concludes this beneficial treatise asking Allāh to send His peace and salutations upon the Prophet, his *Ṣaḥābah* (Companions) and upon his family.

5. Benefits from this Lesson:

There are a number of benefits to be derived from this lesson:

1. The acknowledgment by polytheists of Allāh being the only one who can give benefit or protect from harm.
2. The inefficacy of associating partners with Allāh:
3. The polytheists' genuine recognition of the futility of associating others with Allah, particularly evident when facing life-threatening situations.
4. The inconsistency in polytheists' beliefs, as they abandon their associated deities once the danger at subsides, raising questions about the credibility of polytheistic practices.
5. The perpetual commitment to polytheism or *Shirk* by polytheists in modern times: The recognition that the polytheists of contemporary times persistently commit *Shirk*

in both ease and hardship, indicating a more severe manifestation of *Shirk* compared to earlier generations.

### VIII. Assessment:

1. How does the author (may Allāh have mercy upon him) argue that polytheists in modern times are more severe in their Shirk than those in earlier generations?
2. Provide an exegesis of *Sūrah* al-‘Ankabūt (29):65, as presented by Ibn Kathīr or as-Si’dī (may Allāh have mercy upon them).
3. How did ‘Ikrimah's (may Allāh have mercy upon him) recognition of the futility of polytheism manifest during the sea journey?
4. How do the commentaries emphasise the inconsistency and irrationality of polytheistic practices?
5. Summarise the author's concluding remarks in the treatise.

### XI. Extension Activity:

The venerable scholar *shaykh-ul-Islām* ibn Taymīyyah said:

“If you establish intermediaries between Allāh and His creation, such as those who act as a barrier between the sovereign and his subjects, whereby they present the needs of the people to Allāh, then know that Allāh guides His servants and provides for them through their intercession. People seek their help, and they, in turn, seek from Allāh. Just as intermediaries with kings ask the kings for the needs



of the people due to their proximity to them, and people ask intermediaries as a matter of respect, either to initiate the request to the king on their behalf or because seeking through intermediaries is more beneficial than seeking directly from the king, considering the intermediaries are closer to the king than the one seeking the needs. Therefore, whoever establishes intermediaries in this manner is a disbeliever, committing polytheism. They must be called to repentance, and if they do not repent, they face the penalty of death. These individuals resemble Allāh to His creation, equating the created with the Creator and assigning rivals to Allāh.”<sup>120</sup>

Read the above text then answer the following questions:

1. What is the primary warning given regarding the establishment of intermediaries between Allāh and His creation?
2. How does the text explain the concept of intermediaries and their role in facilitating communication with Allāh?
3. According to the passage, why is the establishment of intermediaries considered a severe violation and tantamount to disbelief?
4. What examples are provided in the text to illustrate the inappropriate nature of establishing intermediaries in one's relationship with Allāh?



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<sup>120</sup> *Majmū al-Fatāwā*, vol. 1, p. 126.

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The venerable scholar *Imām* Muḥammad b. Abdul-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān at-Tamīmī (may Allāh have mercy upon him)., was born into a household of knowledge and piety. His father, Abdul-Wahhāb b. Sulaymān, served as a judge and legal authority in Najd, Saudi Arabia, and his grandfather, Sulaymān b. ‘Alī, was a renowned legal authority and jurist in the region. The *Imām* travelled to various places in pursuit of Islāmic knowledge, including Makkah, Madīnah, Irāq and al-Aḥsā.’ He faced numerous trials and tribulations while calling people to *Tawḥīd* and the authentic creed. Eventually, he settled in the town of ad-Diriyah, invited by its ruler, Muḥammad bin Sa’ūd (may Allāh have mercy upon him). Together, they united to spread the true teachings of Islām, leaving a lasting legacy. The esteemed author, *Imām* (may Allāh have mercy upon him), wrote many books and treatises, several of which are fundamental for the contemporary study of Islām. The *Imām* (may Allāh have mercy upon him) passed away in the year 1206 AH/1792 CE after a brief illness. May Allāh have mercy upon him.

This treatise, '*The Four fundamental Principles of Islām*' (Arabic: *al-Qawā'id-ul-'Arba'ah*) includes the fundamentals of *Tawḥīd*, or Islāmic Monotheism, and its antithesis, *Shirk*, or polytheism. The author writes in a clear and lucid manner, conscientiously supporting each issue or point with scriptural evidence from the Noble Qur’ān and the authentic *Sunnah*.

This commentary aims to present an English commentary of the text - the Four Principles - focusing and elaborating on issues pertinent to English-speaking contexts and, in essence, is a synthesis of a number of commentaries and explanations written by the venerable and erudite scholars of Islām.